

## In The Name Of Sinestro

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## In The Name Of Sinestro

by [SushiOwl](#)

### Summary

This is the story of Thaal Sinestro's life spanning from his childhood to his first year in the Green Lantern Corps.

# The Best Possible Tutor

## Chapter Summary

The Sinestro family has some seriously broad connections.

The Sinestro family was well known on Korugar. Each generation had something to offer to her people. Maligus and Kirani Sinestro were no exception. He was a composer a many musical works of renown, and she was a politician of the highest caliber. Their children, Thaal, a young man just entering his teens, and Kida, a little girl who knew when to be quiet, were much like their parents in that they were very bright and learned beyond their years.

The family reserved the den for serious discussions about the state of affairs in Whonere, the father's current project, the subjects at school that Thaal was devouring or what kind of pet Kida really wanted if she managed to take control of the conversation. This time it was about Thaal and how it was time for him to start making decisions on his future.

"Have you thought about possibly taking further classes in economics or perhaps politics?" Kirani asked as she sat on a firm ottoman and ran a brush through Kida's long, silky sheet of black hair. The young girl was in turn brushing the hair of her doll.

"Not particularly, mother," Thaal answered from where he sat at one end of the couch, away from them and trying to focus on the book he was reading.

"What about criminal justice?" she suggested, turning to look at him with a cool gaze in her golden eyes. "You did rather enjoy the procedural section of that class you took last winter. I think you would make a fine attorney, Thaal, and perhaps even a judge." There was a kind of calculation in her tone, and a bit of pride, and it made Thaal look up at her. "It would bring great esteem to the Sinestro name."

Thaal placed his silver marker in his book and closed it, looking down at his sister as she twisted her doll's hair in small, tight braids. "I do enjoy my classes on politics, but I do not think that is the career path for me," he told her carefully, not wanting to diminish her suggestions and position in any way. To that, she just offered him a half a smile but said nothing, going back to brushing Kida's hair.

"Then what did you have in mind?" Maligus asked from his desk. He had been absorbed in writing his music that Thaal had thought he hadn't been paying attention. He set down his pen and turned his chair to regard his son. "How about a position in the arts?" He put his hand on the back of the chair and stood, taking his cane and walking over to the couch. He had the barest of limp in his gait. It was an old injury from childhood.

"I'm not sure I'm suited, father," Thaal said, looking down and rubbing the book's spine with his fingers.

"Perhaps not as a composer, no, and maybe not even in the musical area, but don't count yourself out yet. You do love the museum, son, and perhaps you could become a curator or owner." Maligus sat down on the couch, stretching out his favored leg and laying both of his hands on the top of his cane. "You could own all of the museums if you wanted. And the concert halls."

Thaal suppressed a sigh, the corners of his mouth drawing back and down. "That is a good suggestion father," he said, still looking down at his book and drawing his thumb across its title. "But I was thinking of going into other studies, such as histories and sciences."

Maligus shifted his head, watching his son. "Are you planning on becoming a scholar?"

"I think you'd make a terrible teacher, Thaal," Kida just had to say.

"Hush!" their mother hissed at her, tilting the girl's head back and placing her hand over her mouth, before she turned her attention back to her son.

Thaal narrowed his eyes at his sister, and he could tell by the crinkling at the edges of her eyes that she was smiling behind their mother's hand. He looked back at their father. "Actually I was weighing the option of archaeology." When his parents didn't say anything immediately, he shifted on the couch, pulling one foot up under him and showing them the book he was reading. It was one of his many history books. "There's a lot missing from my readings. There are things my teachers and tutors can't tell me. I want to know everything I can about our planet, our people, but there are pieces missing from the puzzle."

His parents looked at each other, and his father was the first to let out a slightly exasperated breath from his nose. "Thaal, what you are proposing to do could take years, decades, a lifetime."

"You may not ever find the answers you seek," his mother added solemnly, finally releasing Kida to go play with her doll elsewhere.

Thaal understood that his parents were very logical people, and what they were saying was very true. "Perhaps," he agreed, laying the book back in his lap. "But if I succeed, I'll be hailed as the greatest archaeologist Korugar has ever had."

He knows by the way his parents' faces change that those were the perfect words. And when they look at each other he can almost hear their silent conversation. There has never been a scientist or a true historian in the ancestors of the Sinestro line. He could open up a whole new branch of glory on the name.

What they are unaware of is that he was not interested in glory. He craved knowledge, and learning of the past of the planet and people was pure and sweet.

"Well," his father finally said, looking back at him and letting a smile come onto his lips. "If that is your path, then you will need a proper tutor to get you started off right."

Thaal was a bit taken aback by this, but he grabbed onto it greedily. "I have spoken to all the history teachers and tutors at my school, and none have been able to answer any of my larger questions. I haven't been able to reach out to any of the professors at any of the universities, but--"

"Let us take care of that," Maligus said, reaching over and setting his hand over his son's. "Your mother and I will comb through our connections and find you the best tutor possible."

Thaal gazed at his father's hand, before he looked at his parents and smiled at them.

After a couple days, there was still no word from his parents on who would be tutoring him, and Thaal was trying not to be anxious. He couldn't eagerly walk up to them and start grilling them on who they had been talking to and what they felt their options were. Instead he continued his reading, consuming everything he could. A lot of what he could find was redundant and still inconclusive.

Korugar was an ecumenopolis, and that main city was Whonere. Beyond the city limits was a barren waste land the covered 2/3rds of the planet. There weren't many records of exploration beyond the mountains, so Thaal was sure that there was something amazing out there. It was suspicious that Whonere had a satellite orbiting the planet with picture taking ability, but only photos of the city were shown to students.

As Thaal was comparing information in a few of his books and writing down notes, he heard the soft swoosh that his door made when it slide open. His parents would have chimed their arrival, so he sighed in annoyance but didn't turn around. "What do you want, Kida?" he asked, continuing his writing.

He heard his sister's tiny feet rush over to him, and all of the sudden her arms were around his waist and her doll was in his lap. "What are you doing?" she asked, standing on her toes so she could see on his desk. "Are you being boring all by yourself?"

"I'm studying," he told her, setting down his pen and trying to dislodge her arms from around his waist. She was frighteningly strong for a little girl.

"You're always studying," she complained when he dropped his hands. She put her foot on the rung of his chair and climbed into his lap, picking up his paper and looking over the words. "What's that say?" she asked, pointing to a word with far too many letters.

"Exploration," he said, resting his chin on top of her head.

"And that?" Kida asked again, pointing to another word.

"Information."

"And that?"

"Kida, you know that says Whonere," he said, rolling his eyes up. She was just being annoying for the sake of it.

"I know," she said with a pout, bringing her doll up to sit on top of one of his books. "Why can't you studying something interesting?"

"It's the history of our planet. Of course it's interesting," he said with a frown.

"Not to me, it's not," she told him, standing her doll up and making it dance across the desk.

"That's unfortunate," he said, reaching over her to grab the doll by the head and lift it up out of her reach.

"Hey!" she cried, throwing her hands up for her doll. "Give her back!"

"Say you'll get out of my room, and I will," he said to her evenly, not batting an eye as she gave him a puffed lip glare. "Say it."

"Fine! I will! Give her back!" When Thaal set the doll in her hands, she hopped off his lap and held the doll to her chest. "You're still boring," she told him with a huff, before she marched toward the door.

"Brat," he said after she had left.

It was a few days later that the family had a visitor. Thaal hadn't been expecting anything when he

walked into the entrance hall on his way out, a book in his hand. He stopped in the archway to the room when he saw his father talking to someone whom he was definitely not a Korugarian tutor. In fact, he wasn't even Korugarian at all. His skin was a kind of pink, and he was wearing the strangest green and black outfit with a symbol on his chest.

"My wife would have liked to greet you as well, but she is very busy with the Council at the moment," his father was saying, and he seemed to be smiling.

"I understand." The alien noticed him there and turned to regard him, which made his father turn to look as well.

"Ah, Thaal, come here," his father said, gesturing him forward, and he set his hand on his shoulder when he did. "This is my son. Thaal, this is Abin Sur, a historian and a Green Lantern."

"It is nice to meet you," Abin Sur said kindly, and his smile was so gentle that it was appalling. No one he knew smiled like that.

"You speak our language," Thaal said, apparently misplacing his manners in his awe.

But Abin Sur didn't seem to mind. In fact, he laughed. "No, I do not," he said, lifting his hand to show Thaal his ring. "This translates your speech for and projects my own words in a language you can understand."

"Amazing," Thaal said with his eyes wide. "And you're here to tutor me?" It was astounding.

"I was a historian first. And I have encountered much as a Green Lantern. Your parents thought that the broadness of my knowledge could be most beneficial to you," Abin Sur said with a nod.

"You do not have to be limited to just the history of our world, my son," his father told him, squeezing his shoulder. "You can do so much more. I did say we would find you the best tutor available."

Thaal was still a bit amazed. He looked from Abin Sur to his father, his face splitting into a grin. "And you were right. Thank you, father."

# The Greatest Green Lantern

## Chapter Summary

Abin Sur takes Thaal Sinestro to meet a very special Green Lantern.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Abin Sur was not just a scholar. He did not regurgitate information in a monotone like the tutors that Sinestro had come in contact with before. No, he was a born story teller with a passion for the knowledge he passed on. Every time he spoke, Thaal couldn't help but be enthralled by his voice and the content of his words. It was as if he felt every thing he said, and he told tales about his adventures as if they had only happened the day before.

“How many planets have you visited?” Thaal asked. He was sitting on the couch next to Abin Sur, his legs folded and a book open and forgotten in his lap. They had been talking about the mountain ranges, but their conversation had evolved into one about all of the different ranges Abin Sur had seen on different planets.

Abin Sur was a patient man, and he seemed to welcome all of Thaal enthusiastic questions. “Every single one with life in my sector, as well as several outside of it. There are many races of people that all need a Green Lantern from time to time.”

“And you've brought order to all of these planets,” Thaal said, making it a statement instead of a question because he believe that Abin Sur could do anything with the power ring of his.

“And peace,” Abin Sur added pointedly, because apparently that was important too.

Thaal didn't say it, but he wasn't sure there could be peace at all without a certain level of order and control over the people. That was what his mother had always told him, and he agreed with her. The citizens of Korugar needed a firmer guiding hand than what they currently had, which was what she was trying to get implemented with the rest of the council. But all good ideas meet resistance from the ignorant, which was something she had taken to saying in the past few years.

“I wish I could go off planet,” Thaal says, looking down at the book in his lap before he shut his book and set it to the side. “I'd like to go see other civilizations and see how they compare to Whonere.” He pushed his bottom lip up and out, thinking about all the possibilities. “I'd especially like to see the Green Lantern world.”

“Oa?” Abin Sur asked, lifting his brows as he twisted more toward Thaal, putting one of his arms across the back of the couch.

“Yes. I want to meet all of the other Green Lanterns and ask them about their worlds. It must be exciting to have so many different races all in one place. I can only imagine the different kinds of conversations you must have with each other.” There must be so much to learn in that sea of green.

“I have had one or two conversations about how disgusting foods from different planets are,” Abin Sur said with a smile, and he laughed at the look that Thaal gave him, before he leaned in and ruffled

his hair. Thaal gasped at the contact, before he hurriedly and obsessively flattened his clean cropped hair back down. He was still getting used to Abin Sur's idea of casual touch. "Oa is certainly a place of diversity. If there is one thing I would love to have access too, it is the Book of Oa."

"What is that?" Thaal asked, intrigued.

"It's the history of the universe as written by the Guardians," Abin Sur explained, turning and sagging down the couch with his hands laying limply over his thighs. "It's a sacred text, and none of the Lanterns are allowed to read it, except those of the highest ranking. That's all of two Lanterns."

"Why?" Thaal asked, unfolding his legs and pulling them up so he would rest his bent arms on top of them. "Are they keeping secrets?" He'd learned that most authorities kept information to themselves, usually because they had something they didn't want those in their charge to know about. His parents had always taught him to be suspicious of anyone that didn't share, which meant he was suspicious of everyone.

Abin Sur just smiled at that, before he shook his head. "No, I don't think so. They probably just believe that the Book of Oa is to be read by those that earn it. It's really too bad that one of the Green Lanterns that has the clearance has never even been to Oa. But then I doubt he is very interested in reading about the universe."

Thaal was about to ask what Abin Sur meant by that, but his thoughts were interrupted when Kida and their father came into the room. He was holding her hand, and she seemed in high spirits even though she wasn't holding her doll. He was even smiling. That made Thaal curious.

"Ah, hello, Abin Sur, good to see you," his father said. He had been locked away in his study with Kida all day, so he hadn't known that Thaal's tutor had arrived. "Is everything going well with the studying?"

"Yes," Abin Sur said, standing up. "Your son is very bright and extremely inquisitive, but I'm sure you knew that." He turned to Thaal and smiled.

"Of course," his father said, nodding to his son before he patted his daughter's hand. "I would have greeted you earlier, but I was busy with my music. I have just discovered my daughter's ability at dancing, and I was quite thrilled. She is very controlled in her movements and talented beyond her years."

Immediately a kind of hot jealousy spread over Thaal's spine, and it was all he could do to keep his face controlled and not show his annoyance. His father was proud of his sister, so proud that he was gloating. He had used words of pride to describe her before, but never so passionately. The only thing his father was ever passionate about was his music, and now Kida was part of that. Thaal couldn't help but feel a sudden dislike for his sister. It wasn't fair.

"I have a request," Abin Sur suddenly said, and Sinestro looked up at him to find him still smiling though there was something to his expression he could not read. "Would it be too bold of me to take your son off world? There is a planet that I'd like to take him to that he could gain invaluable knowledge from."

Thaal's eyes widened, and he quickly looked at his father. This was the kind of opportunity in learning that didn't come around every day. There was no way that his father could deny him such an experience. He did look like he wanted to, probably due to some fatherly urge to keep his son near. It would be just Thaal's luck that his father decided to be parental just when it was the least convenient for him.

But his fears were thankfully left unrealized as his father gave a 'hmm' and then nodded. "I will need to speak to my wife about it. We will have some concerns that will need laid to rest before anything."

"Of course," Abin Sur said with a sagely nod.

Thaal wasn't pacing, really he wasn't. He was just passing by the door to his father's den repeatedly so that when he, his mother and Abin Sur finally emerged from their discussion, he would be right there for them to share their discussion with. Okay, he was pacing, but he couldn't help it. He had tried pressing his ear to the door and even using a crystal glass, but his father's study was soundproof for a reason.

On one of his passes, he never toppled over his sister. "Thaal, watch where you're going!" she complained, standing her ground so he had to step away from her. "What are you doing?" She looked at him then at the door, before she smiled a little and tucked her doll under her chin. "Are you trying to eavesdrop?"

"No," he told her firmly, because he wasn't. Not anymore. "I'm just waiting."

"You really want to leave, don't you?" Kida asked.

Thaal had been looking at the door, but he turned his eyes back to his sister at that. She had the strangest expression. It was kind of sad, and it made him uncomfortable. "I'll come back," he said, taking another step away from her.

The door to the study opened then, and his parents didn't exactly look surprised to find them just outside of the door. But they also were smiling, so that was a good sign. "We've agreed to let you leave the planet with Abin Sur," his mother told him, and Thaal somehow suppressed the urge to jump up and down. "But only for a day, and it can not interrupt your studies."

"He has assured us that he knows of a fast enough way to travel," his father said, looking back to Abin Sur, who nodded. Thaal could tell his father was curious about this traveling.

"How?" Thaal asks, looking to his tutor. The man merely lifted his hand, and his ring glowed.

"I really would have preferred a traditional spacecraft," his mother said the next day as they stood in the courtyard to see Thaal and Abin Sur off. Kida was on her hip, and she was holding her far tighter than need be.

"Please do not worry, mother," Thaal told her, hoisting his bag onto his shoulder. He planned on taking notes. He walked with Abin Sur out to the middle of courtyard where there was plenty of room. He watched Abin Sur's ring glow and then, bit by bit, a bright green vessel assembled around them. He watched panels and wiring fall into place along with cogs, screws and things he didn't know how to name. They were standing in a shining green cockpit, and Thaal couldn't even remember how to function.

"Have a seat," Abin Sur said, moving to sit in one of the rounded chairs in front of the controls. They were moving and lighting up of their own accord, as if they were on autopilot, but Thaal had a feeling that was just for his benefit.

Thaal sat down next to Abin Sur, pulling his bag into his lap. Green belts crossed over his chest, securing him in place as the ship lifted silently off the ground. He supposed a construct—as Abin Sur had told him they were called—didn't need jets and thrusters. They were moving purely by the force of will. "Amazing," he breathed out, before he looked at Abin Sur. The man wasn't even touching the steering device. It was simply undulating slowly on its own. "What planet are we going to visit?"



he asked.

Abin Sur smiled, and there was something mischievous about that expression, a hidden joke. “This planet is not a what,” he replied, before he turned toward the window. Before Thaal could ask what he meant, he said, “Brace yourself.”

Thaal pressed his back firmly against the seat, his heels digging into the floor and his hands tightening around his bad. The warp jump put his stomach up in his throat, and he forgot how to breathe. He had about a half a second of being totally uncomfortable but awed by the stars shooting by, before it felt like that came almost to a complete stop. They were still moving, even rather quickly, but it felt like a crawl now.

And then Thaal saw the planet. It appeared to be grey, but it had a green stripe around the middle. And in the center of that stripe was a very familiar symbol. He shot his eyes to Abin Sur's and that smile was still there. “Is this Oa?” he asked.

“No,” Abin Sur said as they neared the planet.

“Then what--” Thaal tried to ask.

“Patience.” The ship started to come apart around them, pieces disconnecting in an almost backwards way than it had come together.

Thaal almost screamed, fearing the crushing vacuum of space, but as the ship faded away a green light surrounded him. He looked at himself, floating there inexplicably, before he looked at Abin Sur, who was encased in his own green light. “You could have warned me,” he complained.

“Where is the fun in that?” Abin Sur asked, before he turned toward the planet and started to descend onto it, pulling the boy with him. They set down in the grey clearing at the center of the Green Lantern symbol.

Thaal immediately stared to look around for clues as to why his tutor brought him to this place. There was no sign of any kind of industrialism or even the more primitive kind of civilization. As far as he could tell, there was very little life at all. He saw a few birds, but beyond that and the lush greenery there was nothing he could tell just by looking. Even the sky was unassuming.

He looked at Abin Sur, and his frustrated confusion must have shown on his face, because his mentor laughed. “This is Mogo,” the man said, spreading his arms out to gesture to everything around him. “The oldest and mightiest of Green Lanterns. Mogo, this is Thaal, my student.”

”Hello, Thaal.”

Thaal shivered, looking around quickly. He hadn't so much heard those words but felt them tickle along the back of his mind. That should have been disconcerting. But the all encompassing voice was actually very soothing and gentle, like a very old, very big but very quiet beast. He couldn't tell gender by the voice either. It was both masculine and feminine and at the same time neither. Thaal had never thought he would ever wonder about a planet's sex.

“Hello,” he replied softly, before he cleared his throat and tried again. “Hello, Mogo.”

Then something alighted on his stunned mind, and he turned to look at Abin Sur. “When you said there were only two Lanterns that would be allowed to read the Book of Oa but one couldn't, you meant...” He pointed down at the ground. At Abin Sur's nod, he let out a soft gasp and looked around. “Mogo, you can't move? Are you stuck in your star's gravitational pull?”

There was a moment before Mogo replied. Perhaps the planet was considering. "I have never thought to move," the planet said into his thoughts. "I have never had the need."

"Ah," Thaal replied, not sure what words would be an appropriate response. Mogo seemed just so calm. "How did you become a Green Lantern?" he asked, almost blurting the words out. That was a good question, wasn't it?

"I was not a Green Lantern, and then I was," Mogo replied cryptically.

Thaal must have made a face at that one, because Abin Sur chuckled. Not to be deterred, he continued to question the planet. His curiosity was bordering on painful. "Have you ever fought an enemy?" he tried, hoping the answer wouldn't be as vague this time.

"Many," Mogo replied, and that was it.

Perhaps Thaal's questions were specific enough. "And you've never lost?" he asked, his brow furrowing.

"I have not."

Thaal felt like tossing his hands up in the air. He wanted details, and he was not getting any. How could he take notes about a sentient planet that did even give him anything to write down? Still, he was not going to give up. He pulled his bag open and drew out his paper and pen, looking around for a decent surface to write on. As if Mogo sensed his need, a large flat rock broke out of the ground next to a bent root that he could sit on. Nature's desk. He brushed the soil off the rock and sat down.

Quickly he jotted down that which Mogo had already told him. "If you don't move, how do you protect your sector?" he asked, sure that question would incite a longer answer.

"There is no life in my sector other than my own," Mogo replied easily.

"Then why have you been in so many battles?" he asked.

"They come to me."

Before Thaal could ask anything else, Abin Sur chipped in on the conversation. "There are many warriors in the universe that want to battle the largest and greatest Green Lantern," he said, moving to sit on the large root next to Thaal. "There was a fleet of planet conquerors that came to claim Mogo, but their ships were disabled by his blasts easily. They did not know what they were up against. No one does. That is why Mogo wins every time."

Thaal wrote all of this down so quickly that his usually neat and clean penmanship went a bit sideways. He stared at the words on his piece of paper, because he looked around at all the plants and trees. Mogo controlled all of this with a kind of wide-spread consciousness. Were the birds and bugs part of him too, or were they merely permitted to live there?

"Mogo," Thaal started, his thumb rubbing anxiously along his pen. "You are the greatest Green Lantern of them all, aren't you?"

"I have been told."

Thaal didn't think Mogo was being modest. He just answered truthfully. "If so, why don't these Guardians of the Universe use your power to destroy all the known threats in the universe? I'm sure they could find a way to move you around."

"We do not destroy," Mogo told him without even a second's hesitation. "We do not kill."

"You don't?" Thaal asked, turning to look at Abin Sur.

"Our rings prevent lethal force," his tutor told him.

"And if they didn't?"

"We would still not kill," Abin Sur told him carefully. "It is our job to protect the innocent and bring criminals to justice. We do not judge them ourselves. That would be murder."

Thaal gazed at Abin Sur's blue eyes for a long moment, before he blinked his own. It must have taken so much control and restraint for the man not to encounter the scum of the universe and not to let rage cloud his judgement. It may have been the easy way to just kill criminals right out, but it was not the righteous or pure way. He understood, and he respected Abin Sur and his Corps for following an iron set of rules. They must have carried such a weight on their shoulders.

Thaal continued to question Mogo and Abin Sur until he had pages full of ink. Halfway through the day, Mogo provided them with rich fruit from the vines of one of its trees. It was incredible to watch the fruit grow right before their eyes until it was fat and juicy. Mogo seemed all too pleased that they enjoyed the sweet and tart fruits. In fact it seemed almost happy that Thaal and Abin Sur were there at all.

"Mogo," Thaal began as he watched the rinds of the fruit be engulfed into the ground. "Are you lonely?"

"No," Mogo said. "I do have visitors. You and Abin Sur are here now."

"But you are alone most of the time. How do you pass the time?"

"Time is unimportant."

That was telling. Thaal continued to ask Mogo questions on until the sky darkened and he knew they would have to leave. "Thank you, Mogo," he told the planet as he put his papers in order and closed them up in his bag. Flowers bloomed throughout the clearing, and their sweet scents drifted along the breeze to brush across Thaal's cheeks. It made him smile in an almost silly way. It was Mogo's farewell.

Just outside of Mogo's orbit, Abin Sur built the same craft around them again, but he didn't immediately shoot off through the stars again. "Did you enjoy your day?" he asked.

"Yes," Thaal said, and he didn't mean to sigh as he said it. It just happened.

"Something wrong?" Abin Sur asked, his brows crinkling together.

Thaal chewed the inside of his mouth for a moment, but he shook his head. "No. I just wish I could have stayed longer. My home will feel unremarkable compared to all of this," he said, gesturing out into space and toward Mogo. "I have to go back to the limited information available on my planet."

"But you're going back to your family," Abin Sur said, and he was smiling now.

"Yes, to my sister," Thaal grunted.

Abin Sur laughed at that, and the vessel they were in turned in the direction of Korugar. "I understand. I have a sister too of about your age," he said, giving Thaal a look he didn't understand.

“Do you want mine?” Thaal asked as the belts crossed over his chest, and he hugged his bag to him. “I just want all girls to stay away from me and leave me to my books.”

Abin Sur laughed again, a deep chuckle in his chest. “Just wait. You won't feel that way for too much longer.”

Thaal very much doubted that.

## Chapter End Notes

Here is a [companion image](#) drawn by the great and wonderful Jasjuliet.

# Dancing in the Light, Crying in the Dark

## Chapter Summary

Maligus Sinestro asks far too much of his daughter, and Thaal feels powerless to help her.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

In the past few months, Thaal had never enjoyed his time with a tutor so much. Abin Sur was everything he could have asked for and more. If he wasn't able to answer one of Thaal's questions, he went and found out for him. He had on numerous occasions contacted his fellow Corps members, and only a few of them seem exasperated by the questions. One of them had been in the middle of the fight but had contacted back later she she was done. He had been particularly interested in a Slyggian called Salaak, an analysis officer that put missions for the Corps in order and spoke directly to the Guardians. He had only been part of the Corps for a few solar years, Abin Sur had said, but he was invaluable.

The times when Abin Sur wasn't around were the most boring times of his life. Korugarian tutors and teachers could not compare, and he found the information available to him almost laughable. He still cared about the secrets of his planet, but he also want to go beyond the stars and see what else was out there. He wanted to meet other life forms and learn from them.

As he daydreamed about becoming an adult and manning his own space craft, his chin resting on his arm on his desk, he didn't hear the soft noise of his door opening and shutting. He was too busy plotting a star course in his mind. So he jumped when he felt a small hand lay on his thigh, and he looked over to find his sister staring at him. Her face was wet, and her lip was trembling.

“Kida,” he said, sitting back and picking up her little hand in his. “What's wrong?”

She sniffed very loudly, pulling her hand away so she could wipe frantically at her face. “Can you help me take my dancing shoes off?” she asked, her voice broken and shaky. “My feet hurt.”

Thaal looked down at her feet. She was standing with her toes facing in, shivers going down her legs. He stood up wordlessly and turned to put his hands under her arms, lifting her onto his seat before he went to his knees and started undoing the black bands that crisscrossed up her leg almost to her knee. She gave a little moaning noise when he began to pull off her shoe, so he went slow, his hand supporting the back of her leg.

He hadn't known what he was expecting, probably that she was just being dramatic, but it wasn't this. Her toes and foot were swollen, and purple blood was seeping out beneath two of her toenails. He whispered a vulgar word that he wasn't supposed to know and looked back up at his sister's face. She pulled her brows together and wiped her nose.

“How long have you been dancing today?” he asked as he undid the laces of the other shoe and pulled it off too. The result was more of the same. It must have been so painful for her to walk to his room let alone dance.

“Since this morning,” she told him with a snuffle, trying to spread her toes out. But the motion seem to hurt so much that she whined in her throat. “Father wants me to dance to the piece he's written at the Mortality Reminiscence this year. He says I have to be perfect.”

Thaal held his little sister's heels in his hands and didn't feel jealous for his father's attentions anymore. Instead his feelings shifted to a want to protect the girl. It still wasn't fair. “That is months away. You should tell father you don't want to practice this much. You could damage your feet.”

Kida shook her head. “But I do. I like being around father all day. If I don't do this, he won't want me around as much.”

It was unfortunate the Thaal knew exactly what Kida meant by that. Their father was a very driven man, and when he was busy with his music he did not want to be disturbed. His shoulders sagged, and he let a breath out through his nose. “Kida,” he started to say.

“Practice makes perfect,” she told him.

Reluctantly, he agreed.

“There is a planet in my sector on which the sentient beings are very peculiar,” Abin Sur was telling him. They were on the floor in the middle of the sitting room, books spanning around them like an still orbit. “Some of them are very violent, and they kill each other more than outside threats.”

Thaal was trying his best to be an attentive listener this day, but his thoughts kept drifting back to his sister. It was all he could do not to go and burst into his father's study to check on her. “Why would they do that?” he asked absently.

“Many different reasons,” Abin Sur told him, picking up a book. “Unlike this planet, the whole of their planet is covered in populated areas. They have borders between cities, countries, continents, to keep one another out. They find each other so different that they murder for it, for politics, monetary value, and religion.”

Thaal's brows came together at that, finding the concept ridiculous. “But they are the same species, aren't they?” he asked with a scoff.

Abin Sur nodded, before he gave a single shouldered shrug. “They are not all bad, but they are a young race. It is possible they will grow out of it as their technology progresses and they are forced to work together.”

“But you are the Green Lantern of the sector. Why don't you go to their governments and show them what they should be doing? Tell them how primitive they are being.” It seemed so simple to him.

Abin Sur shook his head, leaning forward a bit. “That would not go as you expect. There is a high possibility they will try to kill me for being alien to them. Their governments and scientists mostly deny the chance of there being life beyond their world.”

Thaal had to say it. “That's stupid.”

“It's ignorant,” Abin Sur told him, and Thaal didn't see the difference. He face must have shown it because his tutor went on to say, “They will learn. They are not all closed minded. The imaginative ones will guide the way to change.” He lifted his hand and put it on Thaal's shoulder. “It's those that ask questions that remake worlds.”

Thaal felt heat come to his cheeks and ears, and he let out a embarrassed little laugh, before he

cleared his throat and looked off to the side. Abin Sur was a little too amazing at times. He didn't know what to do with himself around him at a moment like this.

“Now, tell me,” Abin Sur said as he dropped his hand. “What is on your mind today?”

“What do you mean?” Thaal asked, fidgeting with the book in his lap uncomfortably.

“You've been distracted. Is something bothering you?”

Thaal looked at his sincere eyes and made a frustrated noise in his throat. “I think my father may be pushing my sister too hard in her dancing,” he said, his face matching his thoughts. “He makes her dance all day, and she is too afraid that he'll stop paying attention to her if she asks for him to go easier on her.”

“I see,” Abin Sur replied with a furrowed brow. “If you have concerns, Thaal, voice them. It does not do to keep them to yourself. Your sister is too young to know how to properly speak to an adult.”

Thaal let out a sigh through his nose, wishing it was as simple as just that.

It took a week for Thaal to find the opportunity to confront his father. He could have blamed Abin Sur not being there for a day to him finally having time, but the truth of the matter was that he just hadn't had the nerve. He pressed the chime button on the door pad to his father's study, but when no one responded he pressed the open key. Immediately music blasted him in the face, and he realized that no one could have heard the chime in this.

His father's music was sharp, precise and almost surgical in the way one note met another. And now that he could see his sister's dancing, he understood why his father pushed her so hard. She was as controlled as his notes, her body moving deliberately with pointed toes and angled arms. She really was a kind of prodigy.

“Oh, Thaal,” his father said as he lifted his fingers from the keys of his instrument. “What is it?”

Thaal looked at his sister, who had immediately sat down on the floor, not looking at him as she put her hands on her aching feet. She must have wanted to pull those blasted shoes off so badly.

“Father,” he said stepping further into the room. “I am—I--” This was already going south. His father's stern eyes threatened to take all of his resolve away. “I believe that Kida may need more rest from her dancing lessons.”

His father's brow quirked up, and he turned on his bench, setting his hand on his thigh. “Oh?”

“I think you may be pushing her too much,” Thaal said, trying to put more confidence in his voice.

His father's eyes narrowed just a little, and that was probably the most frightening thing in Thaal's world right then. The man never yelled and never hit, but his disappointment was life shattering. “Kida,” he said, looking at the girl, and her shoulders went up as if she would rather disappear than be spoken to. “Am I pushing you too hard?”

Kida swallowed and quickly shook her head.

Thaal's father stood up, his fingers curled tightly on the head of his cane. “My son, I believe that it is best that you keep to your studies and stay out of affairs that have nothing to do with you.”

Swallowing, Thaal's eyes hit the floor, and his fingers curled into fists. “Yes, father.”

Abin Sur returned a couple days later, and their session went about the same as the last one. Thaal held his thoughts in and participated to the best of his ability, but he could only give half of his attention as his thoughts raged. He hated how he voiceless he felt around his father. He respected how absolute he was, that was true, but it didn't mean he had to like it.

They were in the sitting room again, surrounded by papers that they had both written on. Thaal was starting to recognize Ungaran words. He hoped that in the span of Abin Sur being his mentor, he could learn his language. The man didn't need to know Korugarian with that power ring of his.

“Did you talk to your father?” Abin Sur asked abruptly, probably since Thaal didn't respond to his story.

Thaal shifted, pulling his feet underneath him. “I did,” he said, an expression that he refused to acknowledge as a pout coming onto his face. “He told me to mind my own business.”

Abin Sur gave him a sympathetic expression. “I am sorry, Thaal.”

Thaal shook his head. Abin Sur could not be blamed, so he need not apologise. It was his own fault for over stepping his boundaries and thinking his father would listen to him. He wanted to blamed his sister for being to afraid to speak her mind, but he couldn't, not when his own father scared him too. And he had five years on her.

Thaal wasn't expecting his sister to come into the room then, but she did, and she was limping. “Kida--” he started to say, but she fell into his arms and sobbed into his neck.

“I don't want to dance anymore!” she cried. “My feet hurt so much!”





Thaal adjusted her in his lap and quickly undid the strings of her shoes, gently pulling them off. They were swollen again. The nail of one of her smallest toes had been pressed up against the inside of her shoe so hard that it had split, and part of it was hanging off. There was blood, dried and fresh.

“By the Negative Space,” Abin Sur breathed out in surprise.

“Here, take her,” Thaal said, hoisting his sister into Abin Sur's lap, before he got up and hurried away to find the kit they kept full of antibiotics and bandages. His sister was very quiet, almost worryingly so, as Abin Sur wiped the blood from her feet, treated the toe nails and wrapped them. He had a determined look on his face when he rocked back on his heels and stood up. “What are you doing?” Thaal asked after him.

He moved his sister over to the couch, before he hurried after his mentor. He found him standing outside his father's study. The door was open, and they were talking. Even before he could hear them he could tell by the expressions on their faces that they were having a disagreement.

“I understand that your daughter is a talented dancer,” Abin Sur was saying, a firmness to his voice that Thaal had never heard before. “But she is still a little girl. If you push her too hard, she'll break.”

Thaal's father shifted his weight more onto his favored leg, standing up a little taller and using his

cane less. "I am aware of my daughter's limits, and I am not forcing her to dance. She is doing it of her own free will."

"Pardon me for being so bold, but I believe that your daughter is allowing you to drive her to the point where her feet bleed because she wants you to be proud of her."

Thaal swallowed when Abin Sur said that, because it was exactly what he had wanted to tell his father the other day. He wanted to be able to speak so directly, so openly, and with a force behind his words that made people listen. He didn't want to stumble over his words and show his father that he feared him. He wanted his father to regard him with respect.

But Maligus Sinestro was not one to be told what to do, even by someone as confident as Abin Sur. "I do appreciate your concern," he said, speaking through his teeth and proving that he didn't actually. "But just because you tutor my son does not give you the right to tell me how to parent my daughter."

"I am not speaking as your son's tutor," Abin Sur said with surety. "I am speaking as a Green Lantern. I will not tolerate abuse of an innocent."

Thaal nearly gasped, his hand going to his mouth and his eyes blowing wide.

But instead of getting mad or acting insulted, his father took in a deep breath and letting it out through his nose. He offered Abin Sur a friendly smile. "Thank you for tutoring my son. Your breadth of knowledge has been most helpful, but I do believe that your services are no longer required." He brought his cane in front of himself, laying both of his hands over the top of it with a kind of casual intimidation. "I also believe that gives you no reason to remain in this sector, is that right?"

Abin Sur just frowned a little. "That is correct."

"Then, please, say your goodbyes and get off my property." His father took a step back, and the door closed between him and Abin Sur.

Abin Sur stood there for a few moments, before he turned to Thaal and gave him a defeated smile. "That could have gone better." He walked up to Sinestro, setting his hand on his shoulder. "Then I suppose this concludes our lessons. It's unfortunate that they had to be cut short."

Thaal kept an iron grip on his emotions, refusing to allow himself to show sadness. He was especially not going to cry. But as he spoke his voice trembled. "I wish you didn't have to go," he said, his brow furrowed and his hands balled into fists at his sides. "It's not fair."

Abin Sur took a step closer, putting his arm around Thaal's back and pulling him to his chest. The contact made him lose what hold he had on his emotions, and his eyes widened as tears welled up in them. "No, it's not fair," Abin Sur agreed, rubbing his hand between his shoulders. The touch was so familiar and kind that Thaal couldn't help but wrap his around around Abin Sur's waist.

"But Thaal, listen to me, you need to be strong for your sister. She needs a champion, and you can be that for her. And one other thing." He gently bumped Thaal's chin with his finger so he looked up at him, his tears spilling out of the corners of his eyes. "Talk to your mother."

Thaal nodded rapidly, stepping back and quickly wiping his eyes. They were stinging, and he hated it. He hated how his face burned and his nose would run. It was gross and vulnerable, and it made him look like a child. He didn't want to feel like this anymore.



He followed Abin Sur out into the courtyard, watching the green glow surround him, and the man smiled at him. “Do not worry, Thaal. I have a feeling we’ll meet again.” He lifted off of the ground, turning toward the sky, and he flew so quickly that Thaal heard the air crack.

“I hope so,” he said after the man was long gone.

Thaal's mother was easier to talk to than his father. While she could not be moved on her political beliefs, she was far more compassionate when it came to the welfare of her children. So when Thaal told her all that had happened that day and how Kida had come to him crying with bleeding feet on multiple occasions, she reacted with a fair amount more heat than Abin Sur had. She stormed through the estate, her robes billowing out behind her.

“Maligus!” she snapped as she entered the study, and Thaal crept in behind her, remaining by the door. “What are you thinking making Kida dance until her toes bleed! You could do serious damage to her feet. Do you want her to be able to walk, let alone dance?” She struck an imposing figure, standing with her hands on her hips and her chin tilted up. It was no wonder she had risen so fast in the ranks as a politician. She was smart and ruthless.

Thaal's father didn't respond right away. He swallowed and stood up, leaning on his cane. The only person that his father couldn't intimidate was his mother. “Kida is a very capable young girl. If she didn't want to dance, she could have easily told me.” He moved over to her and set his hand under her elbow, trying to gently urge her out of that pose, to disarm her.

But Thaal's mother was not having it. She took a step back and remained in that pose. “Do not be ridiculous. She wouldn't tell you anything, because we've taught our children to trust our judgment. You're betraying that by using her.”

“Kirani, you should see her dance,” his father went on hopefully. “With more practice, she could be

perfect.”

Thaal's mother lifted her hand and slapped his father sharply across the face. “Just because your dancing career ended before it began does not mean you can force one on our daughter,” she hissed, before she whipped around and walked back toward the door. She grabbed Thaal's wrist and pulled him out, and the last thing he saw before the door closed behind him was his father's dangerous gaze.

## Chapter End Notes

Wonderful illustrations drawn by the amazing

# In Search of Progress

## Chapter Summary

Thaal refuses to let life happen to him any longer and takes control.

Pouting and being moody was not usually a luxury that Thaal allowed for himself, but after his father released Abin Sur from service as his tutor, he found he couldn't help it. He was being sulky, and he didn't want to talk to anyone. He was almost mirroring his father's attitude, because the man had locked himself in his study and rarely emerged just as Thaal didn't want to leave his bedroom. This went on for weeks.

And now that he'd done it a few times, Thaal was beginning to enjoy sleeping in. Or, well, it made the day go by faster, which was beneficial to him, because he could avoid his family that way. However his family had had enough of being avoided.

Thaal was dozing when his door opened, and when the light of his room flicked on, he closed his eyes tighter and groaned, turning over and hiding under his pillow. He vaguely heard the quick pattering of little feet before his sister's body slammed into his, and he let out a coughing gasp.

"Wake up!" Kida squealed, straddling his back and pulling at his pillow.

He had a death grip on it, and he made some dark growling noise at her. "Go away!" he barked, though the sound was muffled since he was buried in his blankets and pillows.

"Get up! Get up! Get up!" she continued, bouncing to punctuate her exclamations.

"No!" he cried, starting to struggle to dislodge her. Unfortunately that meant she managed to get the pillow away. He tried to pull his blankets up over his head, but her sitting on him prevented that. So he just crossed his arms over his head. "What do you want!"

"Mother is taking us into the city to go shopping. She says I can buy a new doll. She's waiting on you, so get up!" She tried to work the blankets off of him, but he curled up and twisted so they knotted around him.

"I don't want to go. Tell mother to go without me," he told her with a kind of defeated tone.

"Mother says you have to come, because you've been shut in here for such a long time. She says fresh air will do you good."

Some days Thaal really didn't like his sister, and today was one of those days. "Kida, seriously. I don't want to go. Now go away and leave me alone."

"But, Thaal--!"

Thaal sat up, glaring at his sister from a couple of inches away. "I said leave me alone!" he shouted at her.

Kida stared at him, before her bottom lip jutted out. Then she started taking a deep breath through her nose, her eyes narrowing.

Immediately he tried to get her to stop. “Kida! Kida, no! Don't! No! Sto--”

Her scream was ear splitting. And her lungs were strong enough that she could do that for what would feel like forever. He grabbed his pillow and pressed it to her face, knocking her down onto her back. She didn't struggle, just continued to scream, even if the noise was muffled.

“Fine, I'll go, just shut up!” he snapped at her, and immediately the noise stopped. He lifted the pillow and found her grinning. Briefly he wondered if smothering her would upset his parents or if they could just make a new one.

“Get ready,” she told him excitedly, before she leaped off of the bed and hurried out of the room.

Begrudgingly, Thaal rolled out of bed after battling to be released from his blankets. He cleaned himself up and for the first time in a few days looked himself in the mirror. As he was brushing his hair he noticed something over his lip. Stubble? He touched it, running his fingers along it. It was the beginnings of a mustache. He ran his hands along the rest of his face and found it completely smooth, so it was only in that one spot. For some reason this facial hair made him happy. Children didn't have mustaches. He was going to be an adult soon, and it showed on his face!

He finished getting ready and went out to find his mother and his sister. They all looked very proper in their outing clothes. They were covered in mostly black but with hints and swirls of gold along the sleeves and hems. Before they walked out of the door, his mother stopped him, lifting his chin with her hand. Thaal prepared himself for a lecture about isolating himself, but he was a bit shocked at what she really wanted to talk about.

“What is that on your face?” she asked, eying him critically.

He stared back up at her, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. “A mustache,” he explained, before his lips moved and he sucked the top one between his teeth.

“Why are you growing a mustache?” she asked, a smiling alighting on her face. Her thumb was rubbing across his chin gently.

He fought the urge to fidget. “Because I'm not a little kid anymore.” He hoped she wouldn't ask him to shave it.

Her smile grew a little wider, and she leaned down to press her lips firmly into his cheek. “You may say that, but you'll always be my little boy.”

Thaal made an exasperated noise, making a show of rubbing his cheek, though he wasn't too upset. He wouldn't admit it out loud, but if his mother thought of him as a child then that was okay. His mother rarely babied him, but when she did he found he didn't mind it.

The Mortality Reminiscence was upcoming, so the market was spilling into the streets. The time of the festival was the only time when the people of Whonere indulged in open air markets, because it meant that everyone had to be within close proximity of each other. Thaal did not appreciate so many people being within touching distance of him.

Kida wanted every doll she saw, but their mother held her hand, tugging her away from the stalls, and told her to wait until she had seen all the dolls and then could make an informed decision instead of an impulse buy. Thaal thought that was a bit much to ask of an eight-year-old. Their mother kept asking him if he wanted anything, and he kept saying no.

“Oh come now, Thaal, there's must be something you want,” his mother told him, gesturing to a stall of books.

He looked but shook his head, until he noticed a tube of maps up in the back of the stall. He immediately went over and asked to see them. There were parts of them that were plains brown and unexplored, and that interested in him. Before he could even turn to look at his mother and ask for them, she had already paid the stall keeper.

“Why don't we go and sit by the fountain?” his mother asked a while later, apparently tired of walking around and corralling two children.

“I like the fountain!” Kida exclaimed, smiling up at her and pulling her toward the steps that led to the square where the fountain was.

Thaal rolled his eyes. Of course she did. Who else would like a fountain of five dancing women except his little sister? She could be such a child at times. He watched her break free of his mother's hold, and his mother tried to jog to catch her, leaving Thaal behind.

No one heard the shot. One moment Kirani Sinestro was chasing her daughter, and the next she was falling down the white stone steps, leaving a trail of too bright purple blood behind her. There was a moment of terrible silence in which everyone turned to look and see what had happened, and then the next was screaming and running.

Thaal got knocked down by the panicking crowd, his shoulder banging harshly against the steps. The tube of maps bounced down the steps. The moment he could he got up, looking around for his sister. He spotted her by his mother's body, just standing there and looking down at her. He ran to her, pulling her to him and pressing her face into his chest. “Don't look,” he gasped to her.

It took way too long of a time for the authorities to get through the crowd to them, thus he had been given too big of a chance to stare at his mother's body. Her robes and the stone around her were soaked in her blood. Part of her skull was just gone. For years that's all he saw when he closed his eyes.

As everyone had expected, Thaal did very well in the university. He threw himself into his studies, took on far more work than most underclassmen and graduated early. He was twenty-three-years-old when he graduated with honors, multiple degrees and in a shower of recommendation letters from his professors.

Home became just a place to sleep after his mother's death, and when he had gotten the chance to live on campus he had gone for it immediately. He had stayed on campus in the off months, taking speed classes and volunteering at the local museum. The first time he had come home was after school was over. His sister now lived with his mother's parents, and his father rarely spoke to anyone, even the servants. He had become a true recluse. His composing had gone so radical that no concert hall would play it.

So Thaal was surprised when he found him in the sitting room when he got to the estate. He stopped in the archway, and they stared at each other for a while. There was nothing to fear in his father's gaze anymore. He was an old and broken man. He pitied him in the same way he felt sorry for a wounded and dying animal. He no longer thought of this man as his parent. He was his father in name alone.

“Look at you,” Maligus said, lifting his crystal glass to him. He was drunk. “You're a man now. Good for you.”

Thaal let out a breath through his nose, holding back the insults and accusations he so wanted to shout out. How could he curl in on himself after his mother's death and leave Thaal and Kida to fend for themselves? How could he give up? How could he bring shame on the name Sinestro? He

walked by him on the couch without responding to him, heading towards his old room. He had everything he needed, except one thing.

He hadn't looked at his maps since the day his mother had died. He had tossed them into his closet, and there they had stayed. He dug them out and drew them over to his desk, pulling them out of their tube and unrolling them across its surface. His breath hitched in his throat, and he touched the corners of the four maps, where blood had seeped into the paper and dried. He swallowed, rubbing one corner between his fingers. It felt just like the rest of the paper, if warped.

That day haunted him still. It had been the longest day of his life. He remembered holding Kida on the couch as the police explained to his father that his mother had been a target because of her political views. The incident hadn't been remote. Three other council members, her colleagues and supporters, had also met their ends in similar ways. The officers had talked as if Thaal and Kida couldn't understand them, as if they were just ignorant children. They weren't. They understood completely.

His mother had been a visionary. She knew that Whonere needed more police that could better handle the illegal activity. She knew that those officers needed to have the right to enter places of suspicion so they could stop drug and weapon trade. The people needed to be aware that their government would do what it needed in order to have peace, even if it meant pressing in on privacy. The people would have found it agreeable if they had just given it a chance.

Now the city was divided and on the verge of civil war. Those with freedom had too much, and it wasn't uncommon to hear that someone got shot or was found dead after spending too long in an illegal null ray house. The city was a place of debauchery and violence. Only the rich were safe, and the poor were left to rot.

Thaal had to leave. He had to follow his purpose or he would have nothing. He rolled up his maps again and stuffed them into their tube, before he walked out of his room again. He didn't look back. He didn't even glance at his father as he went by him. The man was worthless now.

He did need to go see his sister though. She and their grandparents were the only family he had that he could talk to, or that he was willing to anyway. His sister had started her stint at a university too, though in the arts. She remained with their grandparents since their home was close enough. He couldn't blame her. He probably would have lived with them too if he had had the chance.

After his mother's death, he had looked after his sister himself. He had made sure she had gotten to school, had everything she needed and stayed away from their father. He had become her champion, as Abin Sur had told him to become, and he had run the house while his father had gone into a down spiral of alcohol and madness. But when he had gone off to the university, he had needed to leave her with their grandparents. She had told him she hated him for leaving her alone. He had not visited nearly enough.

Kida answered the door, and she looked a little startled that he was there. She was almost the same height as he was now, even when barefoot. And she had the habit of walking on her toes to make her look statuesque. She gestured over to the chairs on the long stone porch, sitting down and pulling her feet underneath her. "It's good to see you, brother," she said in a cold voice.

His lips pressed into a line, and he leaned back with his arms on the rests. "Same to you," he said, trying to put some kind of feeling rather than guilt into his tone. "How is your schooling going?"

"Fine," she said shortly, her nail scratching at her own arm rest. "What are you doing here, Thaal? You haven't been by in almost two years. This can't be a social visit."



Thaal sighed deeply and unhappily. "It's not," he admitted, before he crossed his arms and tried to catch her eye. She was looking down and away from him. "I'm leaving the city, and I don't know for how long."

"You finally found someone to take you off-world again?" she asked him bitterly, stabbing her thumb nail against the wood of the arm rest.

"No," he all but growled at her. "I'm going outside the city walls and past the mountains. I'm going to see for myself what I haven't been able to find out from other people." It had been his mission since he was a boy. He was going to discover something new, and he was going to have the knowledge he had always desired.

Kida looked up at him finally, laying her hand limply over the arm of the chair. "The desert? Thaal, you could die out there," she told him in a kind of whisper.

"I'll be fine," he replied, uncomfortable at her sudden change in attitude. If only she would give him warning some time. "I've been preparing for this for almost ten years. I've accounted for every possible variable."

"I doubt that," Kida told him with a frown. "There's no way to be ready for everything."

"I am," he replied with a finality.

Thaal had arranged for transportation to the mountain paths, but beyond that he had to travel on foot. He had packed light and tight, carrying more than a month's supply of water and plenty of protein packed food. Beyond that, a blanket and a compact tent, all he had were his maps and a journal. And that was plenty.

The trek through the range took him a day, and he set up his tent. He held his tiny flash light in his teeth as he wrote in his journal. He wanted to have everything about his journey written down in case Kida was right and he hadn't accounted for everything. There wasn't much to report about him traveling the mountain path, other than that time when his foot slipped on a rock and he thought he was going to die screaming. He left that out. No need in reporting something embarrassing and irrelevant.



The nights in the desert were bitter cold, colder than anything Thaal had ever experienced, but he had brought the thickest blanket imaginable to stave off the freeze. The days were worse. The sun beat down on him like burning fists, and he only kept his sweat soaked top on because he knew his skin would blister apart if he took it off. Many times he thought the hard dirt ground was going to give away into water, but after chasing mirages for two days he finally just stubbornly resisted.

And then Thaal started finding things unexpected. There was a crater in his path, one practically the size of his university with several ripple layers. He judged it to be about four stories deep and wide enough that the journey down it wouldn't have been too steep. He crouched on the edge of the crater, drawing his fingers along it. It was smooth. Something white hot had split the ground so fast that the sand had melted.

He stood up to look around, his brows drawing together as he did so. Was it a wreckage of a ship or a meteorite? He looked down into the crater and took a deep breath. Well, one way to find out. He stepped over the edge and did a kind of crab walk down, before he got a hold of his momentum and could job down without losing his balance. He stopped halfway down and knelt on the edge of the ripple, picking up a piece of black glass. No, wait, it was metal.

It was a pliable kind of metal, bendable but not breakable. It was the kind that had been used in the spacecrafts. He recognized it because of the trip his class had taken to the space station. But what was it doing in the middle of the desert? He could remember any stories of downed crafts or debris that had fallen in the barren zones. Korugarians had an impeccable space travel record.

Thaal found more of the black metal at the center of the crater. Something had definitely crashed here, and it had come down fast and hot. Unable to keep himself contained, he crouched down and dug his journal from his pack, writing down everything he was seeing in vivid detail. He gathered a few of the pieces of metal, wrapped them in one of his compressed sample bags and put them in the front pouch of his pack.

There was nothing more to gather about the crater, so he climbed his way out of it and looked up at the sky. The sun had moved behind the mountains, and it was cooling down. He made camp for the night and pondered this new puzzle. There wasn't much he could do about it until he got back to the city. He had marked it on his map and written down every detail he could about it. Still, it didn't sit right with him. There was no reason for this to be hidden from the people of Whonere.

And yet it was a secret. Why!

The next day was tragically uneventful. So was the next. A heat blister on the tip of his ear didn't count. But the day after that was worthy of celebration. As he was walking he noticed a deviation in the flat hard ground ahead of him. At first he thought it was just another mirage, but as he drew closer and it didn't disappear he felt like running. Ruins!

It looked like the beginning of a city cut into the ground. There were multiple layers, mostly buried in the dirt, but he could distinctly see columns and passageways, not to mention carving in the walls. This was it. He descended a half eroded set of stairs precariously, his hands flat against the wall. This was Korugarian history. Maybe the whole planet hadn't always been a barren wasteland. Maybe something had happened so long ago that it was so longer written.

Sinestro couldn't read the language, and that wasn't a surprise. He figured it was just so ancient that it was forgotten. He was starting to think Korugarian historians just weren't very good at their jobs. He would change all of that later. He pressed a piece of paper to the markings and grabbed his stick of black chalk to make an etching when he noticed something.

Thaal's brows came together, and he moved over to a large column, looking up at the figures carved into it. "What in the..." he whispered, lifting his hand to move his fingers down the digitigrade constructed leg. They were tall, thin, with long limbs, sharp angled faces and pointed skulls. Their eyes were large ovals. They didn't seem to have mouths, but it was possible they hadn't been carved.

He moved around the column and found more and more depictions of these creatures. It was a practical catalog of their lives. There was eating, working, worshiping an unknown deity and more.

But there were no carvings of these sentient beings with any Korugarians. It didn't make any sense.

Thaal went through the ruins for hours, and as he did so he began to recognize the pattern of the characters on the walls. It would take him days to even try to translate it, but he would take the time if he needed to. He had plenty of etchings of all the markings. And if he could just use the context clues of the pictures, perhaps he could work up a rough alphabet.

As the sun lowered behind the mountains, he stared at the column of the unknown beings. Were they aliens? Had they visited ancient Korugarians? Had they been seen as gods and guiding hands? It was all so frustrating.

Thaal heard a kind of whistling noise, something he didn't recognize. He glanced around and saw nothing, so he looked up. His eyes widened immediately, and he leaned over the edge of the level he was on. Something was falling out of the sky.

# Makings of Greatness

## Chapter Summary

Yet another Green Lantern is impressed by Thaal Sinestro.

Thaal couldn't see the object plummeting toward the ground, but he could tell that it was coming in fast and right at the ruins. He was on the wrong level to get to the steps that led out, so he put his back against a wall and just watched the object come barreling down. As it drew closer, he noticed the distinct colors of green and black.

“Abin?” he whispered.

The impact was literally ground breaking, and the ruins shook around him. The ledge he was on split, the ground breaking underneath his feet. He scrambled to the side, falling into a passageway and crawling quickly to steadier ground. He heard the sound of rock and columns falling behind him and looked back just in time to see the mouth of the passageway close up.

Thaal breathed hard in the darkness, before he coughed on the dust. He pulled his pack off and dug blindly through it until he felt the cool metal of his little flash light. He climbed to his feet as he clicked it on, running the circle of light over the wall of rubble. If he tried to dig himself out, it would just come down on top of him, so he left it and his pack. He had explored these ruins enough that he could find another way out.

When he did his suspicions were mostly confirmed. Though it wasn't Abin Sur, it was a Green Lantern that fell out of the sky. He assumed he was most likely the Green Lantern of the sector. He didn't recognize his race. He had bulbous blue insect eyes set on a flat triangle of a head that rested on a thick stalk neck. He was short and stout with big arm and legs. His hands, if they could be called such, were sets of four tentacles. And on one of those wriggling digits was his power ring. He was also bleeding and having trouble getting up.

Thaal was about to lean over the edge to tell him he'd be right there to help him when someone else floated down from the sky. He hid behind the column and watched him land in front of the Green Lantern, and by the way he looked at him he could tell they weren't allies. This one was also bipedal, and his skin was a kind of pale yellow. He was partially covered in armor and had a shield on his back and a gun on his hip. As he drew closer to the Green Lantern, he gave a nasty kind of smile and drew his gun.

Thaal had to help!

He did the first thing that came to his mind; he threw his flash light at him. It pinged off his helmet, and when the man looked at Thaal he wasn't sure what to do next.

“No witnesses,” the man with the gun said, and Thaal had a brief moment to wonder why he could understand him before that gun was turned on him and he was rolling to the side to get out of the way of its shot.

“It's a blaster, of course it's a blaster,” Thaal said as he pulled himself up and pressed his back to a column. He had never been in any sort of fight before. He had to think fast. He could hear the high

pitched noise of the blast going off and coughed on the dust it rustled up. The moment he stopped firing, he ran out from behind the column and into a passageway. He almost got away clean, but a blast nicked the back of his calf.

The pain was extraordinary for such a small area, as if someone had pressed a hot piece of metal to his skin. He staggered, groaning, but he kept moving, and he slotted himself in an alcove. He made himself small, holding his breath as he heard the man's jet pack before he heard his footsteps, though those echoed down the corridor. He stopped right in front of the alcove Thaal was hiding in, squinting in the darkness. He lifted his hand and turned a knob on his helmet that made a light come on over his eyes.

When the armored man turned his head, he had barely any time to open his eyes wider before Thaal punched him as hard as he could across the face. And, in the process, he broke his thumb. He never thought it would hurt so much to hit someone. But then again he'd never had a reason to before. As the man staggered back, Thaal lifted his foot and smashed his heel into the side of his knee, happy that their physiology was similar enough to make him crumple with a foreign kind of curse.

He shook his hand in pain but didn't stick around, running deeper into the ruins. He forced his eyes to adjust by not panicking, taking deep breaths and letting his sensibilities guide him. He leaned against a wall, touching his thumb and letting out a little noise at how swollen it was. He wrapped his hand around his thumb, taking in a breath and jerking his thumb to align the break. He barely contained the noise that action caused.

He vowed to himself right then that he was going to learn how to properly fist fight.

He heard the armored man lumbering around, and when he turned the corner and put his light on him he jerked off to the side, trying to stay out of his line of sight as he shot blasts down the corridor. In the back of Thaal's mind, he mourned the amount of history he was no doubt destroying. They played a kind of game of chase until the man was shouting in frustration Thaal was panting. All of his limbs were tired.

He rolled out of the way of a blast and put his hand on a wall to help himself up, feeling the stone wobble. The blasts were compromising the integrity of the ruins. He had to get out before the whole structure came down on top of them. He came rushing out of the corridor, skidding before he could go reeling off the ledge, and he hid behind another column. He heard the armored man come out too, growling, and he looked around the column at him. He jerked back as blasts hit the column next to his face.

Thaal glanced around him and found cracks in the ceiling, the floor and the column he was leaning against. Hoping this wouldn't lead to him being crushed too, he took a couple steps away from the column and then threw his weight against it. It wasn't much, but it was enough to set the shattering in motion. With not much by the way of options, he flung himself off the ledge toward the ground, rolling with his gut there.

And that was his shoulder dislocated.

He heard more than saw the armored man get covered in rubble, a bit too blinded by pain to move right away. When he did, he pushed himself up with one arm and surveyed the damage. The front of the ruins were half destroyed. There was no sign of the armored man.

Thaal walked over to the Green Lantern, kneeling down next to him and putting his hand on what he hoped was his shoulder. "Green Lantern?" he asked, giving him a bit of a shake. "Are you alright?"

The Green Lantern's giant eyes came slowly open, and he turned his head to look at him. "You

saved me,” he said, though he didn't have a ring. It must have been his ring that allowed him to communicate. “You could have hid and stayed safe, but you saved me.”

Thaal just shook his head. “I had to. I couldn't just let him kill you.”

“There are many that would have. My name is Prohl Gosgotha. Thank you, stranger.” He slowly sat up, obviously in pain.

“I'm Thaal Sinestro,” he said, helping support him with his good arm.

“Sinestro?” the Green Lantern asked, looking at him in surprise. “You were Abin Sur's student.”

Thaal was stunned by this. “You know Abin Sur? He spoke about me?”

“Yes, he—look out!” Prohl Gosgotha's arm shoot out, and a dome covered them. Shots from the blaster burned the outside of the green structure, and Thaal watched as it morphed into a hand with dozens of tentacles as fingers. It grabbed onto the armored man and smashed him against the ground.

Thaal got up and ran over to pick up the blaster that had fallen from the man's hand, pointing at him when the construct released him. He glared down at the armored man, who slowly raised his hands in submission. He looked significantly worse for wear, his armor dented and his helmet gone. He'd also lost his shield somewhere in the crumbled ruins. He was bleeding in various places, and Thaal found his red blood strange.

“What're you gonna do with that?” the armored man asked evenly.

“I might shoot you,” Thaal told him, hoping his trembling wasn't too obvious. The weight of the blaster was so unreal in his hand. He had his trigger finger pointing out straight, privately worried that if he curled it around the trigger he may squeeze it by reflex and accidentally kill the man.

“I don't think you will,” the armored man said, his eyes narrowing. He started to sit up.

Thaal made a threatening step toward him. “Don't tempt me! Get off my planet, or I really will shoot you!”

The armored man stared up at him, before he pushed himself back on his hands, doing a kind of half crawl before he got up. “I don't know whether to curse or thank you,” he said, putting his hands on the handles of his jet pack slowly. “But I have a feeling you'll regret this.” He lifted off, turning away and blasting off without another word.

Thaal stared up in the direction he'd gone for a long time, before he dropped the blaster and succumbed to his weak knees, falling gracelessly onto his butt. He dropped the blaster from his shaking hand. Green appeared in the corner of his eye and he looked over to find the Green Lantern hovering by his side.

“You didn't kill him,” Prohl Gosgotha said, making a construct to gently lift Thaal up onto his feet. “And you could have. You don't know if he'll come back and try to find you.”

Thaal decided he didn't want to think about that, and he shook his head. “I couldn't.” He held his injured arm.

“It is a terrifying concept, taking a life,” Prohl Gosgotha said in a gentle way.

Thaal shook his head again. “No, that's not it. Abin told me a long time ago that Green Lanterns don't kill, that it's not their right to judge criminals. I like that code. It prevents corruption within the

Corps, doesn't it? Power doesn't go to anyone's head. No one uses their abilities for evil or personal gain." He tried moving his broken thumb and winced at the pain it caused. "I want to live by that rule. I want to have a code."

Prohl Gosgotha gazed at him in silence for a moment, before his posture changed. Thaal thought that if he had a mouth he would have been smiling. "Abin Sur was right about you. You are meant for great things. I only wish that everyone in the universe believed the same." He turned his head and looked up in the direction the armored man had gone.

"Who was he?" Thaal asked, holding down his embarrassment about Abin Sur. The fact that his old mentor had mentioned him to his Corps was the right kind of alarming. It also made him miss the man even more.

"A Weaponer from Qward," the Green Lantern explained. "They are from the antimatter universe. They collect technology and weapons from different civilizations so they can replicate and alter them to their use. That one wanted my ring." He wriggled the tentacle finger where the ring rested at him.

"It wouldn't have worked," Thaal said with a certain finality. He had asked Abin Sur about the power rings and what made them function until the subject had been run into the ground. "I was told the ring chooses its wearer, not the other way around."

Prohl Gosgotha just shook his big head. "Being unable to obtain something sometimes makes one want it more." He lifted his hand and put it on Thaal's shoulder, the tentacles moving to rest gently along his neck. "Thank you for everything you've done today. You are very brave. Is there anything I can do to repay you?"

Thaal gave him a tired kind of smile. "Actually, yes."

After he located his pack, Prohl Gosgotha flew him back to the city and to a hospital. His thumb was splinted, and after they forced his shoulder back into place his arm was put in a sling. He needed to go to the museums and the universities to show everyone he could what he found, but he had a bigger need.

When Kida answered the door, she took in a sharp gasp at the sight of him. He must have looked terrible, all bruised with a scattering of bandages. "What in the world happened to you?" she asked, stepping forward and bringing her hand up to cup his cheek.

He lifted his hand, laying it over the back of hers and leaning his cheek into her palm. "As it turns out, I can't account for everything after all," he told her with a hallow chuckle. "Can we talk?"

"Of course," she said, turning her hand to wrap her fingers around his and pulling him into the building. She led him to a sitting room and gestured for him to sit next to him on the rounded couch. "Tell me everything."

He did. He told her about the mountain pass, the burning sun and the crater. She looked just as confused as he felt when he showed her the black metal pieces. She was enthralled when he told her about the ruins, the unknown language and the beings etched into the stone. But her face began to change as he went into explaining the encounter with the Weaponer, her hand going to cover her mouth and her eyes going impossibly wide. When he was done, she was silent for a long moment.

Then she scooted closer and wrapped her arms around his neck, just holding him. He relaxed in her embrace, leaning his cheek against hers and closing his eyes. His arm came around her back. It had been such a long time since they'd held one another. Probably the last time was when he'd left her at their grandparents' place before he went off to college. She had clung to him, begging him not



to leave her. He had regretted it to this day.

“Kida,” he finally said, his voice a bit thick, and she drew back enough to look in his eyes. “Do you want to live together again? I could easily find a place near here. And then after you're finished with your schooling, we could go back home. Father doesn't have a right to makes us feel unwelcome there. We could take it back.”

Kida's brows came together, and she looked down. Immediately Thaal thought that meant she didn't want to live with him, didn't want to go back to the way they used to be. But what she said shocked him. “Thaal, our father sold the estate.”

“He what!” he spat.

“Almost immediately after you left, he sold our old home and disappeared. No one knows where he is. He took everything out of our accounts. Thaal,” She lifted her hands and gently laid them on the sides of his face. “It's all gone.”

The Sinestro estate was scheduled for demolition. A multistory building of apartments was going in its place. Thaal had no money to try to buy the property back because, as Kida said, their father had drained their bank accounts and disappeared with every bit. Everything he had ever owned went up in an auction, and he could only watch as it was all sold.

After that he had no choice but to ask his grandparents if he could stay with them. They were agreeable. They even said they liked keeping family close and were glad to have him, but he couldn't help but take their hospitality with a touch of bitterness. It wasn't supposed to be this way. He was supposed to be able to support himself. But he felt like a little kid again, helpless everything around him.

Despite this, he did take his findings to the scholars. Most of them reacted with puzzlement just as he had. One or two of them wrote him off as if he were making this up to make a name for himself, because now the Sinestro name was worthless. He didn't allow himself to be deterred. Instead he kept pushing and pushing to make this new information public knowledge.

One scholar, an anthropologist, was very interested in the etchings he'd made of the beings in the stone. She told him that she had seen these creatures once before. He followed her in the depths of a warehouse that was filled to the high ceiling with containers on shelves.

“What is this place?” he asked her as she watched her ascend a ladder. Once he got a flash of her underwear beneath her skirt he looked away. He hadn't meant to look.

“Records of history that people have stopped trying to decipher,” he said, opening one container and searching through it before she let out an 'ah ha!' and pulled out a book. She came back down the ladder and showed it to him. It looked like a journal, but instead of being neat and organized it was filled with messy inserts. It was held closed with a band, but by the way it bulged he could tell that it would burst open at the first opportunity it got. Which it did. They spent a minute picking up the inserts that had flung out of it before they huddled over the pages.

As it turned out Thaal wasn't the first or even the second to discover the ruins and the crash, but it had been about forty years since the last person had tried to bring the information out into the open. Now there were more resources and advancements in technology to help Thaal with his case. And he didn't care if it took years.

Thaal was giving a lecture at one of the universities, standing before a projection of a male Ascolian, one of the beings that he had discovered long ago. An artist had rendered a three dimensional version

of the ones that had been on the wall of those ruins. “They were simple sentient beings with limited technology,” he was telling his students, the hologram machine's control in his hand behind his back. “They cut their homes into the ground and survived off of the vegetation they grew on their roofs.”

He changed the image to one of the pictures that had been taken in the ruins. It was a pair of Ascolians farming. “It is from this we know that the planet's surface was once able to support life. These beings did not need mass air purification machines as we do. And I'm sure their cities did not smell half as bad as ours.”

That got a smattering of laughter from the students. He changed the image again to one of them worshiping what looked like an insect in the sky. It had a rounded body, six legs and great pincers on its head. It was painted a bright blue. “This is believed to be their deity. From their text, it has been deciphered that they called it Khaji Lo.”

Thaal was about to say something else about it, but in through the window crashed a tiny bright green comet. It whizzed around the room then came to an abrupt halt in front of him, hovering before his face. He recognized it immediately as a power ring, and that took his breath away. “Thaal Sinestro,” came a voice that filled the whole room. “You have the ability to overcome great fear.” He reached up to it with his left hand, and it slid easily down his middle finger.

Light filled his vision, and when he could see again he looked down to find himself suited in green and black with a white circle on his chest. He was also floating. Thaal stared at himself and let out a tiny laugh, before he was jerked bodily out of the window that the ring had come in through. He shot up, the air snapping around him as he increased in speed. And suddenly he was in space, a sea of blackness riddled with stars surrounding him. The whiteness of the stars zipped by him, and then he was on a new planet.

The buildings were yellow, and he didn't even have a chance to look at all the Green Lanterns he was passing by before he was flown into a building. He passed by a four-armed man that he immediately recognized as the Slyggian Salaak, and then he was in a large room. The ring pretty much flung him onto the platform, and he stumbled and skidded but managed to stay on his feet. He looked up to find a floating ring around the platform, and standing there were several short blue men and women in robes with the Green Lantern symbol on it.

“Greetings Thaal Sinestro of sector 1417, and welcome to Oa,” the one in the middle said. “We are the Guardians of the Universe.”

# Feels Like Home

## Chapter Summary

Green Lantern training begins. Old friends reunite.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

For once in Thaal's life, he didn't know what to say. He didn't know what to think. He was completely blank as he gazed up at the Guardians of the Universe. The situation he was in hadn't even begun to sink in yet. His mind was still back on Korugar in the classroom where he had been giving a lecture on the true history of their planet.

The Guardian that had addressed him didn't seem perturbed by this though. He had probably encountered speechlessness quite a bit in his infinitely long life. He merely linked his hands together under his wide sleeves and continued on. "You have been chosen to join the Green Lantern Corps. Unlike most Green Lanterns that are picked due to their proximity of another Lantern's death, you were chosen specifically. You come highly recommended by sector 2814 Abin Sur and your sector predecessor, Prohl Gosgotha."

Finally Thaal's brain clicked. "Prohl Gosgotha is dead?" he asked, lowering his eyes. "How?" He had thought about him many times in the fast few years, wondering what he was doing and how he was. He had done the same for Abin Sur.

The Guardians looked at each other, and it was another one that answered. This one was a woman. "His planet faced genocidal invaders. He died among them." She sounded quite sad about this.

Thaal's brows came together, and he swallowed. "Are these invaders still at large? Are they going through my sector and wiping out the planets? Is Korugar in danger?"

The Guardian in the center held out his hand, and Thaal stopped talking. "We have already dispatched a platoon of veteran Lanterns to your sector to deal with the threat. You do not need to worry." Despite him saying that, Thaal would worry until he knew for certain his planet and people were safe. "Your only concern right now is your training. We have very high expectations for you, Thaal Sinestro. So see to it you do not let us down."

Thaal took a deep breath, standing a little taller, and he nodded to them. "I will not fail."

When he left the Guardian Chamber, his mind was teeming. He didn't even see Abin Sur until the man was on him, hugging him around the shoulders tightly. "Abin!" he squeaked out, before he embraced him back. "It is so good to see you!"

"And you too!" Abin Sur told him, stepping back and grinning broadly at him. "Let me look at you. My how you'd grown. Last time I saw you, you were but a baby imp of this tall." He held his hand just above waist height, and Thaal rolled his eyes. He hadn't been that short. "And now you're all grown up. And you have a mustache. That was a questionable decision."

Thaal gave him a mock glare. "I'll have you know my mustache is perfect," he said, bringing his

hand up to rub the tip of his finger along it. "I know that you are simply jealous because you're completely bald."

Abin Sur just gave him an even look, one that said he would have punched him for that if they weren't friends. "The males of my race do not grow hair of any sort. Talk to me when you're old and yours has fallen out."

"That will never happen." He hoped.

Abin Sur just laughed, leading him past Salaak and out into the open Oan air, where Green Lanterns were floating about unassumingly. "Have you tried flying yet?" he asked as he lifted up and hovered over the edge in front of Thaal.

"Not yet. I was mostly along for the ride when I rocketed here." Flying was easy, he found out half a second later when he just lifted off the ground. "Oh," he said, turning and moving off the ledge too. "It really is just a matter of willing it, then."

"Oh yes, it's supremely easy. You'll probably do just as well with constructs." Abin Sur reached over and tapped the white circle on Thaal's chest. "You'll have to pass Sergeant Deegan's course before you can earn your symbol. Right now you're a rookie, but don't worry." His mouth split into a grin. "I'll show you all you need to know."

It wasn't exactly special treatment if Abin Sur spent the majority of their training sessions yelling at and beating the sense out of Thaal, was it? The man was a driven taskmaster, and he expected the universe of Thaal. And Thaal was of course eager to succeed and please him. Every time Abin Sur pushed him, he pushed back with everything he had. His constructs were structurally perfect and sound. It was the quick change creativity that he had a problem with.

"You'll have to think faster than that!" Abin Sur shouted out him, dodging his lashing vines construct and throwing three of his own at him. They were different kinds of weapons. And the moment he was able to fend them off, more and more came. "Get off the defensive and take control!"

Thaal put up a bubble around him, and Abin Sur's constructs hammered it relentlessly. How was he suppose to change the situation went he couldn't do anything but put up a barrier around himself? And then the answer was there in his mind, simple as anything could have been. He expanded his protection wide, pushing the pounding constructs back, before it split behind him, becoming a sheet of green.

When Abin Sur realized what was happening, he was already engulfed in the bubble. He was forced to curl up, his hands and feet against the sides. He glanced around for a second, before he smiled brightly. "Well done! That is a good example of making your defense into an offense."

Thaal released him and gave a bit of a smile back. "I'm glad you approve," he told him. He was sore, probably had a bruised rib or two, but he felt a glowing sense of accomplishment. Abin Sur's praise meant more than it should to him.

"I always knew that when you became a Green Lantern, you would take to it naturally," Abin Sur said, gesturing for them to go to their resting spot to sit down. They dangled their legs off a ledge and looked up at the dark sky.

"When?" he asked, lifting an angled brow. "Not if? How could you have been so sure?" If Abin Sur kept going like this, he was going to end up blushing, and that was going to be embarrassing. No Korugarian liked going purple in the cheeks and ears.

“Because I had a feeling about you from the very beginning,” Abin Sur replied without an inkling of shame. “I knew that you were destined to do great things. And I had faith that you would push yourself until you met all of your goals.”

Thaal didn't really believe in things like destiny and faith, but they were suited to Abin Sur. He was a spiritual kind of man with an almost supernatural calm that made him feel at ease whenever he was around him. It was probably why he was such a wonderful speaker. Thaal could only wish that he would someday be able to enthrall with his voice the way that Abin Sur did.

“You flatter me,” he told him, hoping that the heat on his cheeks wasn't too prominent.

“No,” Abin Sur told him simply. “I only speak the truth.” And when he looked down from the stars at his face he gave him a slow smile. “Are you blushing? I didn't know you were capable!”

Thaal just turned his head away, clearing his throat. “No, of course not,” he told him quickly, his fingers drumming on the ledge they were sitting on. “Don't be ridiculous.” Then he huffed as a big broad hand clapped him on the back.

Abin Sur was laughing, and it was a hearty, kind laugh. “Don't worry, your secret is safe with me. I won't tell anyone that you have emotions like the rest of us.”

“I would appreciate that,” Thaal told him, though he was smiling too now.

“Oh, so tell me, how did your ventures on your home planet end up. Prohl told me about your encounter with the Weaponer of Qward, but that's all I know. Did you find the answers that you were looking for?”

Thaal's smile brightened. “I did. The most exciting discovery of my journey was that Korugar is not, in fact, our native planet. We merely settled there.”

Abin Sur's face changed into the expression that many scholars had given him, a mixture of confusion and disbelief. “Really?” he asked, leaning heavily on the word.

“Yes. The information is buried in our history so deep that no one could find it. The settlers wanted to hide it from future generations, I suppose out of shame. I found a crash site, probably from one of the settling ships that malfunctioned. And I found these glorious ruins that depict this other race, the Ascolians, that predated the Korugarians. They lived on the planet when it was fruitful and not the wasteland that it is now.” He knew he was talking a bit too fast, but when it came to this subject he couldn't help but let it explode from him. “I believe that the Ascolians were long gone before the Korugarians arrived. They had an entirely different culture. They had a religion with a deity, this blue insect they called Khaji Lo. It is all over the ruins, and--”

“Wait,” Abin Sur said, setting his hand on his arm, and his expression was strangely serious. “You are sure that this god is a blue insect by the name of Khaji Lo?”

Thaal blinked at him, wondering why he chose that detail to focus on. He didn't believe in this insect god, and he had no idea why anyone would give it much thought. “Yes,” he said slowly, his brows coming together.

Abin Sur's hand slid down Thaal's arm to rest on the ledge, and his face was becoming more and more grave. He let out a long sigh. “I believe that this Khaji Lo that the Ascolians worshiped was not a god, but an agent of the Reach.”

Thaal's brows came together in concern. “What exactly is the Reach?”

“Planet killers,” Abin Sur told him with a startling growl in his voice. “They only just became known to the Green Lantern Corps, so we had believed them new. It is surprising to hear that they may have existed that long ago.” He turned his serious expression on him. “They send this terrible technology to a planet, and it looks like a blue bug. It infects one of the planet's sentient beings and turns them into a killing machine. They wipe out all the planet's defenses, and then the Reach ships come to suck the planet dry.” He was quiet for a moment, before he added, “Prohl's planet was wiped out by them.”

Thaal's mind was racing when Abin Sur was finished, and he must have been staring at him with wide eyes. Had the Reach already wiped the face of his planet clean? Was that why it had once been a blooming planet able to support life and why it was now barren? Was that why the Ascolians were gone? He pressed his fingers to his mouth, turning his eyes away and down. He had felt so close to discovering all there was to know about his home world, but now he only had more questions.

He slid his hand up to cover his eyes, his thoughts drifting to Prohl Gosgotha. He had lost everything: first his people, then his planet and finally his life. The only thing he had been able to think about when he had learned of his death was his own planet's safety. But now that he knew the Reach had likely already finished with Korugar, he felt a sinking guilt.

“I wish I could have helped him in some way,” Thaal told him softly.

Abin Sur's big warm hand came across his back, and he let himself be tugged into an embrace once more. “You did help him. You saved him from the Weaponer. That is more than a lot had done for him. What happened on his planet was entirely out of your control. And if it had not happened, you would not be here. Instead of lingering on things that have already happened, focus on those that could. Those are the ones you can change.” His other hand set on Thaal's left hand, lifting it up. “Use his power ring to make a difference. Don't try to avenge his death. Instead, honor his memory.”

Thaal gazed at their hands, before he curled his into a fist. The power ring glowed softly. He would use this power to honor Prohl Gosgotha's sacrifice, and in the process he would seek justice for his death. This Reach could not be allowed to continue their operations of wiping out worlds and people. He would also lay to rest the memory of the Ascolians.

“This is the chance you have been searching for,” Abin Sur suddenly said, pulling him out of his thoughts. He turned to regard him. “To make a name for yourself, I mean. No one in the universe, especially your people, can ignore you now.”

Thaal's lips twitched up at one side. “I have been considering that,” he said, lifting off the ledge and floating, arms folded and toes pointed. “My father destroyed everything that was the name Sinestro. He gave up on his legacy, so I am going to take it back. I want to be regarded by my family name, not my personal one. I want everyone to look at me and see more than just one man. I want them to see a dynasty.”

Abin Sur watched him closely, and Thaal saw pride growing on his face. He expected him to launch into another heartwarming speech, but instead he just said, “But I can still call you 'Thaal,' right?”

Thaal sighed through his nose, offering him an exasperated smile. “Of course.”

Sinestro—as he would now address himself as, even in his mind—had not thought it possible, but Sergeant Deegan was worse than Abin Sur. He didn't know what a 'poozer' was, but he definitely disliked being called one. He also didn't like being called 'white circle' or 'rookie' by anyone but Abin Sur, but the other veteran Lanterns didn't bother using his name yet. It was completely infuriating.

Even so he did do very well in the initiation training, both because of his own tenacity and Abin Sur's lessons. All the other recruits had taken to referring to him as their unofficial leader, looking to him in team exercises. He didn't mind that they did so. It only gave him more opportunity to prove that he was made to do this and that he would never give up.

Flying through an asteroid field was an interesting exercise in agility. They were fast moving, orbiting a huge planet with an oppressive gravitational pull. He was twisting and rolling through them, and he had just dodged an especially spiky looking rock when he collided with another recruit, a woman named Tul. They flailed for a moment in a mass of limbs, and it didn't help that she had six arms to his two. Eventually he got his arms around her waist and started navigating them through the rocks.

"Sorry, Sinestro!" she shouted in his ear, and he could still barely hear her over the sound of whooshing as rocks went by and crashing when they smashed into each other.

"It's fine!" he yelled back, though he would have preferred not to have to bother. She was not very good at thinking in flight, and she often got flustered. He wasn't sure how she became a recruit in the first place. But even so he was not going to leave her to be crushed between two asteroids.

Sergeant Deegan appeared just outside the belt, flying over them with his arms crossed. "What're you two poozers doin'!" he barked at them. "This isn't a group project. Fly on your own right!"

Sinestro had never been very good at dealing with authority figures. "I'm not going to just leave her!" he shouted back.

"If she can't fly on her own, then she gets left behind! You need to focus on you getting through the asteroids! You ain't responsible for her!" the sergeant yelled, uncrossing his arms and balling his fists at his sides. "She'll never learn if she don't get a chance!"

Sinestro barrel rolled them over a big rock, baring his teeth up at Sergeant Deegan. "What good is it if she dies? How will she get better then? I will not leave any Lantern behind! This is a Corps, and we are all together in this!" He thrust his ring hand out in a fist, slicing an asteroid in half with a giant sword.

Then a big hand engulfed him and Tul, jerking them out of the belt and into safe space. They were pulled apart, and then Sinestro was face to face with a scowling Sergeant Deegan. "You think you know better than me, poozer?" he growled into his face, his eyes narrowing. "I don't usually explain myself to you idiot white circles, but since you seem determined to disobey me at every turn, allow me to let you in on somethin'. You wanna help the other recruits, fine. But they've gotta learn to do their own thing, or they'll never survive if they get attacked, alone, in their own sector. You can't protect them forever."

Sinestro wanted to keep him glare, wanted to stay angry and self righteous, but as the logic of what Sergeant Deegan said sank in, his expression softened and he looked over at Tul. He loathed to admit it, but if she couldn't do anything on her own, then she would certainly be slaughtered by her first enemy encounter.

The construct hand holding him gave him a shake, and he looked back at the sergeant. "You got me, poozer?" he asked in a growl.

"Yes, sir," Sinestro said with a deep frown.

Even if Sergeant Deegan didn't want Sinestro to help Tul during training, he didn't say a word about him assisting her on the off hours. She took to short and direct orders far better than shouting, and

she didn't break down when she did something incorrectly because Sinestro didn't get in her face and call her worthless. Aggression worked with most recruits, but not with Tul. She did respond well to repetition, and she was all for trying and trying again if at first she didn't succeed.

Sinestro only felt a little guilty when the yellow disc he tossed at her went through her construct and smacked her in the forehead. He landed next to her and offered her a hand, and she took it in three of hers, letting him pull her up. She rubbed her forehead with one of her three fingered hands, wincing. "Why is it that our rings don't work on yellow?" she asked, as if he had special knowledge.

He had of course pondered it, but he was no closer to knowing an answer than she was. He gazed at her noseless face, seeing a bruise beginning to form on her gray skin. "I've asked repeatedly," he said with a sigh of a long sufferer. "But the only answer I've received is the yellow directly contradicts green in the light spectrum. Well that makes sense technically, I believe that if we harness the power of will we should be able to overcome anything. So there is something we are not being told."

Tul smiled, and when she did it showed off a row of short pointy teeth. "You mean the Guardians, don't you? Why would they hide anything from us? We are practically their children. They love us."

Sinestro took a breath in through his nose, pressing his lips together. He wondered if such naivety and hopefulness was a racial trait or if it was just her. But he couldn't help but be charmed by her. She was so unlike him that it was fascinating. "I'm sure they do," he said, almost completely lying. "But they are still withholding important information from us."

She just fidgeted with all of her hands, which was an interesting sight. "If so, they must have their reasons. They are so old and wise. I can't imagine that they would hold anything back that would put their Corps in danger. We are everything to them. We wear their symbol." She reached up to touch the white circle on her flat chest. "Well, we will anyway, when we earn it."

Sinestro nodded to her, looking at the bruise on her forehead and then at her slanted purple eyes. "I believe that will happen soon," he said, crossing his arms and letting a smirk come onto his lips. "For all of us."





Abin Sur was quite happy to meet Tul and more than amenable to the idea of helping her train as he had helped Sinestro. Of course, it didn't come without a price, but it was not Tul that had to pay it. As they watched her go through an obstacle course, he said, very casually, "So, I wouldn't have pegged you as one that fraternizes with girls within the Corps."

Sinestro didn't know what he meant right away, and instead he went to explain why he was helping her. "She just needs a different kind of training than the other recruits, but I believe that she can and will do well." And then it dawned on him, and he jerked, whipping his head to look at Abin Sur. The man was grinning! "It's not like that," he insisted, apparently making a comical face because Abin Sur laughed.

"It's alright if you want to court a girl, Thaal, and I'm sure she would love it," Abin Sur told him, still smiling hugely.

Sinestro just narrowed his eyes a little. He had thought the teasing would stop when he grew up. "I have no romantic interest in Tul, Abin, and I never will. She is merely another member of the Corps, or she will be if she can pass and earn her symbol." He gave a sympathy wince as he watched her get tossed by the swinging hammer on the course. But she did get right back up and back in.

"Have you ever had any interest in a girl?" Abin Sur prompted.

"I have. There was a girl at my university that I rather liked," he replied, and the moment he said it he knew he shouldn't have.

"Oh? Did you talk to her? What happened?"

"I did," Sinestro answered, and Abin Sur stared at him in a deeply interested fashion for a long moment, so he rolled his eyes and relented. "She was a lesbian."

There was about five seconds of dead silence before Abin Sur exploded into laughter. He tried to stop, even putting his hand over his mouth and waving hopelessly at Sinestro. When he did get himself under control, his breathing was a bit labored. “Oh, I'm sorry, I shouldn't laugh. It's not funny. But, but Thaal, I think you may need to lower your standards.” His sentence ended in a bit of a squeak as he fell victim to ridiculous laughing again.

Sinestro just mock glared at him, remembering that his sister said the exact same thing.

## Chapter End Notes

If anyone wants to read a little extra about Sinestro and his lady schoolmate, I have it written [here](#).

# Hard Lessons to be Learned

## Chapter Summary

Sometimes the responsibilities to the Corps are greater than any single Lantern.

Sergeant Deegan continued to push the rookies, shouting at them that if they wanted their symbols, then they better give everything they had. Sinestro kept sneaking glances at Tul as they zipped through the obstacles on the rocky, deserted planet they'd been staying on for the past two days. They were all exhausted and hungry, none of them having slept or eaten more than a little bit since they left Oa. But Tul was doing well, and Sinestro was proud of her. He kept thinking to himself that if he could help her succeed then he could do the same for future Lanterns. No one needed to die pointlessly.

"Alright, poozers, hand your rings over," Sergeant Deegan said on the morning of the third day, and all of the rookies looked at each other. "Did I stutter?"

"But, Sergeant, sir," one of them asked, putting his hands behind his back to hide his ring from the man. "How're we supposed to learn to be Green Lanterns if we don't have our rings?"

Sergeant Deegan snorted heavily through his nose, stomping up to the recruit and getting right in his face, and the rookie looked terrified even if the Sergeant was quite a bit shorter. "Your rings don't make you Lanterns, poozer. They are tools, weapons, and you gotta learn how to survive without 'em, otherwise what're you gonna do when you're in the weeds and your ring runs out of juice?"

"Um," the rookie tried.

"Exactly!" the Sergeant barked at him, before he held out his hand. "Give it here."

The Sergeant went around collecting their rings, and as Sinestro handed over his he felt a kind of frustration about the Sergeant's words. It was true that Green Lanterns were slaves to their power batteries. How was he to even patrol his sector without carrying it around with him? He would have to ask Abin Sur about it.

"When you don't have your rings, you've gotta learn to use your surroundings," the Sergeant said as he laced the rings on a construct string and put it around his neck. "Your enemies aren't gonna give you a time-out just 'cause you're powerless." He popped his fingers one by one, before he squeezed his ring hand into a fist. Construct weapons appeared all around him and he lifted a brow ridge at them. "I suggest you all run."

There was a second of shock, before all the rookies, including Sinestro, turned and ran. He wasn't sure what the man meant about using their surroundings, since all they had to work with were huge jagged rocks sticking out of the red ground. He supposed this would require a bit of creativity, but he had fought a powered opponent while ringless before. Of course, then he hadn't exactly had a choice. But since then he had some proper training.

Sinestro ducked behind one of the rocks, trying to gather his thoughts, when he heard the sound of smashing. He glanced around the edge of the rock and saw the Sergeant Deegan was slicing all the rocks he passed in half, the top parts sliding down and landing with a crash on the ground. He

walking so casually, glancing around for the rookies as he did so. Sinestro whipped around to the side of the rock as the green line cut through it, and as the Sergeant was passing, he came out from behind him his fist connecting with his jaw.

This time he didn't break his thumb.

The Sergeant staggered, before he turned his snarling face to him. He didn't get enough time to even call him a poozer before Tul ran up behind him and wrapped her six arms around him, picking him up. He let out a shout as she arched back, smacking his head into the ground. She rolled away as he crumpled, and Sinestro gave her a bit of a wide-eyed stare. He had not expected that from her.

Other rookies appeared from the rocks as the Sergeant groaned and tried to sit up, piling on top of him to keep him down. Sinestro jumped to help, and Tul landed beside him, one of her hands grabbing onto his. He squeezed her hand back, giving her a bit of a smile. The Sergeant had underestimated them. They had indeed used what was around them against him, and what was around them was each other.

Streaks of green light cut through the pile, and Sinestro felt the group shifting outward. Then they were all flying backward, landing on their butts and backs in the dirt. Sinestro pushed himself up to look up at Sergeant Deegan as he floated above them. He was expecting the old man to make more weapons, to try to attack them again and continue the exercise. Instead he gave them all a strangely kind smile and lowered to the ground.

"Well, poozers, I guess that'll do," he told them, lifting his hands to the construct necklace holding their rings. But he stopped, his eyes turning up, and before they could turn their heads to look up where he was staring, green lines whipped around their waists and pulled them all under a large leaning rock. "Look alive, rookies," he said in a deadly serious tone as he released their rings to them.

Sinestro closed his fist as his ring slid onto his finger, and he looked around the edge of the rock up at the sky, Tul and a few others pressing close to look too. There was a ship flying over the planet. It was huge and blue, and Sinestro had a sinking feeling that he knew the identity of it before the questions was asked and answered.

"Who are they?" Tul asked, turning to look at the Sergeant as two of her hands squeezed on Sinestro's shoulders.

"Reach," Sergeant Deegan bit out. "Out looking for more planets to conquer, no doubt. They may get lucky. Oa's that way."

"We have to warn them!" another rookie cried.

"Yes, we do," the Sergeant said. "But they monitor all frequencies, even the ones our rings are on. You can imagine my surprise when I heard the bug bastards chattering over the line. And we can't fly out. They'll see us, and there's no way we can fight an entire ship's worth of their fighters."

"Then what do we do?" Tul asked.

The Sergeant swallowed, looking between all of them. "I don't... I don't know."

That washed over them, and they all looked at each other solemnly. Was there nothing they could do? That couldn't be. They couldn't just sit there and watch at the Reach ship crept toward Oa. They couldn't be so helpless.

Sinestro felt Tul's arms come around him, and he turned his head to her as she set her chin on his

shoulder and embraced him. She had the most peaceful look on her face. "Tul?" he asked as she drew back.

"Thank you. For everything." She turned to the Sergeant. "You need a distraction," she told him simply, before she walked out from under the shelter of the rock.

"Rookie, get back here! Tul!" the Sergeant screamed at her.

She looked back and shook her head. "Get to Oa, sir, warn them. I'll give you time." A gentle smile came onto her face. "Don't worry. I have you all with me." Constructs of the whole group formed by her, shining so bright. "I have no fear." And before they could say anything else, she shot up into the sky, air snapping around her and her constructs. She went in the opposite direction of Oa.

They watched the ship turn slowly to pursue her, Reach agents shooting out from the underside of the ship. There were almost two dozen of them, and they fired light cannons after her. She twisted and dodged, moving too fast for them to predict her movements. But they were still gaining on her.

A cold thought crept into Sinestro's mind and took hold. She wasn't going to make it.

"Come on!" Sergeant barked at them once the ship had moved far enough away, and they all flew off in the direction of Oa.

None of them said a word as they rocketed through space, but they all had the same expression. Sinestro was feeling so many different emotions. He was so proud of Tul for her bravery, because not even he knew if he would have been able to make such a sacrifice. But then he was so angry that the situation had arisen that forced her to make that choice at all. She could have done so much, and now she wouldn't have the chance.

As they went on, a ring passed by them, shooting like a comet in the direction of Oa. It needn't be said that they all knew who it had belonged to.

The Green Lantern memorial chamber was a wondrous room. Sinestro found himself unable to keep his emotion off his face as he stood with the other rookies and several veteran Lanterns, looking up at the green statues of past members of the Corps. It was a bit overwhelming seeing how many had given their lives in service.

"I was not always aware of the level of her will," Sergeant Deegan said, his hands behind his back as he addressed them. He was looking up and above them, a far off expression on his face. "But in her last moments she showed such bravery and determination. Tul saved all of us, and we will never forget her."

The Sergeant turned his head and nodded to Morro, the keeper of the memorial chamber. Morro moved over to a floating chunk of rock with his three winged reptiles following, setting his hand on it. "So it is now written in the Tablets of the Dead for all current and future Green Lanterns to know, Tul's will was great, and she was not afraid. I set your likeness in stone and release your spirit into the universe." He took hold of his hammer, lifting it above his head. "May you be at peace, Green Lantern Tul of sector 862."

When he struck the rock, the light was blinding, but when it cleared there Tul was, standing so proud and beautiful. She had one set of hands on her hips, another crossed and the final lifted up above her in fists. She was smiling serenely. On her chest was not a blank circle but the Lantern symbol that she deserved.

"Speak with me now, comrades, our oath in her honor," Morro said as the statue of Tul began to lift

into the ranks of the others.

“In brightest day,” they all began, and Sinestro could hear voices cracking in the group. “In blackest night, no evil escaped her sight. Let those who worship evil's might, beware Tul's power, Green Lantern's light!”

Sinestro stayed after the others had trickled out, and Morro set his hand on his shoulder, telling him he could take as much time as he needed before he left him alone. He floated up to Tul's likeness and just gazed at her. He knew he should have been able to say something. He had attended enough Mortality Reminiscences that he was well acquainted with the words he was supposed to say. But he couldn't. All he could say was, “I hope to be as great a Lantern as you were.”

He lifted his hand and wiped the moisture from his lashes, before he started when he felt a big hand land on his shoulder. He looked over to find Abin Sur next to him, and he let out a shaky breath before he looked back at Tul.

“It's never easy losing a member of the Corps,” Abin Sur said in that gently, sagely voice of his. “And it's even harder to lose a friend. She was a Lantern of strong will, and it was because of her that we were able to stop that Reach ship.”

“It still doesn't make her death worth it,” Sinestro found himself saying.

Abin Sur slid his hand along the line of Sinestro's shoulders to squeeze his opposite one. “Nothing makes it worth losing someone. But death is part of life, and it is a big part of being a member of the Corps. We are chosen for our capability of making our actions and our deaths matter.”

Sinestro didn't say anything to that, so Abin Sur moved his hand to take his elbow gently. “Come. There's something I want to show you,” he said, and he led Sinestro through the statues until they came across the one of Prohl Gosgotha. “Salaak allowed me to view his final moments as they were stored in his ring. When the Reach came to his planet, he battled the infected member of his race. Then he disabled the ship so it couldn't leave his planet's orbit, even though it was at the cost of his own life and the existence of his planet. In doing so he saved the rest of the sector and allowed for us to come and capture the agents.”

Sinestro took a deep breath. “Are you trying to say that being a Green Lantern requires sacrifice?”

Abin Sur shook his head. “No, but sometimes it is unavoidable.”

A few days after Tul's memorial, Sergeant Deegan's rookies were all called to the Guardian chamber. They all lined up at attention, and the Sergeant stood before them as the Guardians floated above them, silently watching. “Today,” the Sergeant began, and he had a half a smile on his face. “You are no longer poozers. Today you earn your symbol and join the ranks of the Green Lanterns.”

He took a step toward them, spreading his hands out. “You have faced great trials in your training as well as great loss. You have felt pain that no one deserves but every veteran Lantern is familiar with. But no matter what was thrown at you, you have come out stronger. Your will is insurmountable.” He turned and walked to the first recruit in the line, lifting his fist to his chest. “Welcome to the Green Lantern Corps, Li'wen of sector 3901.” His used a beam of light to paint a Lantern symbol on his chest. The blue Lantern lifted his hand and touched his chest with a soft smile as the Sergeant moved onto the next. “Welcome to the Green Lantern Corps, Tazba Vi of sector 2826.”

When the Sergeant got to Sinestro, he gave him a nod that made his heart ache. “Welcome to the Green Lantern Corps, Thaal Sinestro of sector 1417.” The symbol was hot on his chest, but it was a strangely comforting heat. It felt like accomplishment. As he pressed his ring hand to his chest, he

could feel pride swell within him. All of the anxiety dissipated.

Abin Sur was waiting right outside the chamber for him, and he gave him a warm smile. "There you are, Green Lantern," he told him, clapping his hand on his back. "Let us go get a drink."

Sinestro gave a bit of a laugh. He could definitely use one of those. He flew with Abin Sur to the cafeteria, and they ordered some rather heavy alcoholic drinks before they moved into a sitting area. "It feels like I've been here for months," he told Abin Sur as he sat down and took a drink from his glass. "And yet it has only been weeks. This experience has been almost surreal."

"Now that you're a full-fledged Green Lantern you get to leave and go back to your sector. I want to warn you about something that a lot of new Lanterns face," Abin Sur said, leaning forward and putting his elbows on his knees. "Patrolling your sector all by yourself can be very lonely. So you need to hold something in your mind that you look forward to, whether it be going home, coming back to Oa or thinking of someone you love. You need to find a secondary purpose, or all that empty space will consume you."

Sinestro pressed his glass to his lips as he thought about that. What would he keep in his mind as he flew through space by himself? He took another drink and sat back, turning his eyes toward the huge window next to them. He could see other Lanterns flying by, and he wondered what they all had other than this. Family? Friends? Romantic partners?

"My planet is in the aftermath of a war," he said eventually, putting his arms on the rests of the chair and slowly swirling his drink. "The governments are broken. It's a miracle that the education system is still intact since barely anyone can afford to go to the universities anymore." He let out a sigh. "I want to fix it."

"The governments or the education system?" Abin Sur inquired with a tilted head.

"Both," Sinestro answered simply, before he leaned his head back on the chair and gazed up at the ceiling. "I want to assert my mother's ideas to the governments. She knew exactly how the city was supposed to be run and how the people were supposed to be governed. She knew that a firm hand was more important than absolute freedom. She knew what was best for everyone, and they killed her for it, because they are weak and afraid."

"Her death was a tragedy," Abin Sur said calmly.

But Sinestro could not stay calm when it came to this subject. "It was an injustice!" he said, standing up and moving over to the window and putting his hand against it. "No one should die because of the ignorance and fear of others. She committed no crime and did not deserve to be judged by others. She was a genius."

"You're not thinking about finding the ones that killed her, are you?" Abin Sur said, and Sinestro could see him stand in the reflection of the glass. "I've seen what happens down that path, Thaal. Revenge will not give you peace."

Sinestro turned to him, considering his words before he shook his head. "No, I don't. Even if I tried, it is not one person that is responsible, it is all of those that were against her. Instead of serving them death, I will implement my mother's ideas, and they will have to obey or leave."

"Is that what you plan to do when you leave tomorrow?" Abin Sur asked, coming up to him.

"Yes, and I am going to find my father. I don't know what he has been doing with my family's money, but it cannot be good. He is insane." He looked into his drink, giving it a swirl before he

looked at Abin Sur again. “However, on my way to Korugar I am going to make a stop.”

Sinestro set down in the middle of the clearing, and he took a deep breath of the clean and scented air. “Hello, Mogo,” he said, looking up into the sky.

“Hello, Thaal,” Mogo replied, and the voice felt like a brush against his cheek.

Sinestro sat down, folding his legs and smiling to himself as flowers bloomed in a spiral around him. He gently touched one of them, trailing his fingers along its petals. “You don't seem surprised that I'm here. Did you already know that I had become a Green Lantern?”

“I did not,” Mogo told him. “But I knew that you would return.”

Sinestro lifted a brow, pulling his hands into his lap and looking up again. “Really? How is that?”

“I believe that you are my friend.”

Sinestro swallowed, his lips slowly spreading into a smile at that. “I am,” he replied. It wasn't even strange being friends with a planet. Mogo had been in his thoughts since he was a child. And now he needed his wisdom and objectiveness. “Mogo, I am conflicted.”

“About?”

“My ability to do what is needed to be done on my own planet,” he said, turning his eyes back to the flowers around him. They had such a simple kind of beauty. “I have plans for the betterment of my people, but I do not know what I will do if I fail. I think failure would ruin me.”

Mogo was silent for a while, and then the flowers around Sinestro's thighs leaned to touch him gently. “You can only do what is at the best of your ability,” the planet told him in a voice that was almost a whisper. “Do not think about failure, and you will not fail.”

Sinestro's brows went up, and his hands went to touch the flowers around him. He wanted to complain again, to say that mindset wouldn't actually help, but he didn't because the true meaning of Mogo's words seeped into his mind. And he smiled again. “If I have a goal, I need only will it.”

“Yes,” Mogo said, and a breeze drifted by, tousling Sinestro's hair.

“You're right,” Sinestro said, and of course Mogo was right. “I suppose I am only feeling doubt because of all that has happened lately.”

“Tell me.”

And Sinestro told Mogo all about Tul, Prohl Gosgotha and everything he had discovered about his own planet. He wasn't sure how, but he also delved deep into own personal past, telling the planet all about Kida, his mother's death and his father's madness. He ended up on his back, his arms out wide and his eyes closed. Mogo listened patiently, just letting him release all of the things he had been carrying into the air. And eventually he fell asleep.

He didn't dream, and he was thankful for that when he woke up. He sat up, and a blanket of moss that had been covering him slid down onto his lap. He tried to fold it up as best he could and then stood up, looking up at the darkened sky and feeling Mogo's presence all around him. “Thank you, Mogo.”

“You may stay as long as you need,” Mogo told him. A cool wind caressed his hair.



Sinestro nodded. “I will come back. But it is time for me to go home.”

# Family Blood

## Chapter Summary

Thaal Sinestro hunts down his father and confronts him.

Returning to Korugar was like waking up from a dream. Sinestro only just realized the full weight and implications of his new title when he saw the people of his city stop and point up at him. He landed before the main Council building, and the crowd pulled away from him, standing back. Parents clutched their children to them in hesitance. He suppressed the urge to fly away away and cleared his throat. He could do this. He'd made speeches before.

"Greetings, citizens of Whonere," he said to them, putting his hands behind his back. "Do not be alarmed. I am Thaal Sinestro. Some of you know me, or at least know of me. I have been inducted into the Green Lantern Corps by the Guardians of the Universe. I stand before you now with a promise. I will protect this planet, our home, not only from outside threats, but from the corruption that has taken hold in our city." He took a deep breath as the people around him all looked at each other. "Better days are ahead. I swear it."

The crowd around him gazed at him in silence for a long moment, and it was almost enough time for him to regret his speech. They must have thought he looked so mad in his green suit. He wasn't sure what he expected them to do, but it was not to approach him. A man asked what he planned to do about the littering. A woman asked what his ideas about the inflation of the economy were. A child asked is he could take him flying sometime. He quickly realized he had a lot of work to do.

After he answered as many questions as he could, he managed to get out of the crowd intact and flew off to his grandparents' property. Now that he had attended to his initial Green Lantern business, he had family business. His grandmother answered the door, and he was surprised, as he was every time, how much she looked like his mother. He felt the same way when Kida came up behind her. His grandmother squeezed his hand and left them alone.

"When I heard you'd disappeared, I'd thought you'd been abducted by aliens," Kida told him as they sat down on the couch. She turned toward him, laying her head on the back of the couch. "I thought you had finally uncovered something to put yourself in danger."

Sinestro smiled a bit, putting his arm on the back of the couch and resting his cheek on his palm. "Well, you were half right." He tapped the fingers of his ring hand against the symbol on his chest. "You should have seen it, Kida. It was a whole planet of different races. And there were the Guardians of the Universe."

"What are they like?" Kida asked, a smile spreading across her face.

"Humorless," he replied with a shake of his head. "And intimidating. They are as you'd expect all powerful entities to be. And they expect everything from me. I was chosen for the ring by them, instead of the ring choosing me by proximity. I am to show them that the potential Abin Sur and Prohl Gosgotha saw in me is real."

"You just can't stop being special, can you?" she asked.

“What is that supposed to mean?” Sinestro replied, lifting his cheek off of his hand and furrowing his brows. She only shook her head. “Kida--”

“It doesn't matter,” she said hastily. “Now that you're back, what are you planning on doing? Are you to be our planet's champion? Are you going to take all those politics and economics upon yourself?”

Sinestro let out a sigh through his nose, because he couldn't tell if she was mocking him or not. “Not entirely. I'm not to assist in those matters. But right now I have something else I need to attend to. I am going to find our father and have him return what is left of our fortune.”

Kida's eyes widened, and she sat up straight. “Really? How do you plan to do that?”

“By quite a bit of asking around. People will tell a Green Lantern things they do not tell civilians or the police. It will be all about making my presence known,” Sinestro informed her, because he believed that carrying a title was more about perception than action.

“And what if they don't?” Kida asked. “Are you going to use that ring of yours to beat the information out of them?”

Sinestro's eyes flicked to his ring, before he shook his head. “Of course not--”

“Then you're probably not going to get very much done,” she told him simply. “I guess you'll just have to take me with you.” And she shrugged like there were no other options.

He stared at her, wondering how she could have made that jump in the conversation. “No, Kida, that is a terrible idea,” he told her, standing up and crossing his arms. “I can't drag you around on a hunt for a man that may very well be a criminal now. It could get dangerous, and you could get hurt.”

“Thank you for your concern, big brother,” Kida said as she stood up too, putting her hands on her hips. “But you can shove it up your self-righteous ass. I'm not a little girl anymore, and I know how to take care of myself. I've had my own kind of training--”

“As what?” he interrupted. “A dancer?” The moment he said it, he felt regret. But Kida was one of the only people in the world that could make him spit petulant remarks.

She glared at him, before he looked away, drumming her fingers on her hips. “Look, you pompous green bastard, just because you've got that ring doesn't mean you suddenly have all the answers to everything. Do you even know where to start looking? Who to start asking? You don't, do you?” She stepped forward and jabbed her fingers into her chest. “I've heard things. I know things. I have leads. You can take me with you, or you can not. Whatever you decide, I'm going to look for our father. If you don't let me come with you, well then we'll just see who finds him first, now won't we?”

Sinestro narrowed his eyes at her, before he let out a very frustrated sigh through his nose. “Fine.”

Kida, as it turned out, had not been kidding about the things that she knew. She led Sinestro to all the right places. First they talked to a very chatty street dealer that had a line in on all the illegal workings of Whonere. The man stared at Sinestro with wide eyes and acted like he was happy to help, and Sinestro kept a mental note of his name and general whereabouts so he could be taken in at a later doubt.

Then they talked to a very fidgety fence that pulled a pistol on them the moment he saw them. But Sinestro was able to pluck that from his hands with a construct and pin him to the wall before he was

able to get off a shot. Kida asked all the right questions, and Sinestro was beginning to think that she had used some very clever reverse psychology on him. She needed him around to intimidate people into talking, or she wouldn't get very far. He would have been proud of his little sister if he weren't so annoyed.

"You should go into criminal justice," Sinestro told her as they flew to the next destination. They had gained intelligence from the fence that Maligus Sinestro had been washing dirty money, so they decided to go pay the launderer a visit.

Kida just shook her head. "No, big brother, that's your thing, not mine. You can go around and track down scum. I don't want anything to do with these kind of people after we've found Father and gotten back what's ours."

The launderer didn't seem surprised to see them. In fact he didn't even get up from his desk. He did, however, close the notebook he was writing in and put it in a drawer. "I knew you'd eventually come to find me, Green Lantern," he said, lacing his fingers together on the desk. "What can I do for you?"

Sinestro stepped forward to say something, but Kida got in front of him, laying a hand on his chest, and it took quite a bit for him not to growl at her. "What my brother and I would like to know is if you have done business with a certain Maligus Sinestro," she said, sounding perfectly calm, as if they were talking about the ever warm weather.

The man just shrugged a shoulder and leaned back in his chair, putting his hands over his stomach and scrunching up his face like he was trying to remember. "Mm, no, I'm sorry, I do not recall anyone by that name." He smiled as he said it, and it was so obvious that he was lying that it was insulting.

Kida turned completely toward him, walking slowly toward his desk and setting her fingers on the edge. "Now, we heard from another that this is not true. Why would you lie to us? What has our father done for you that warranted you protecting him?"

"Nothing, because I don't know him," he replied easily, watching her closely.

But there was something in his eyes, something hungry as he looked at Kida. He ran his eyes slowly up her arm to her face. He was not taking her seriously, but that didn't mean he wasn't appreciating the fact that she was there. When he licked his lips, Sinestro had had enough.

A construct lifted the man out of the chair, smacking him into the wall and pinning him there. She walked up to him as Kida hissed his name, but all he did was get between his sister and the money launderer. "I have had a very tiring day," Sinestro told him with a blank expression on his face. "I am sick of dealing with people that do not give us straight answers."

The man lifted a soft, shaking breath, but a smile came onto his face again, and he looked down at himself. "What, you know think you can bluff me into giving up my clients? Sorry, Green Lantern, but I've heard what your Corps is all about. You won't do anything to me that a police office wouldn't. It's against your code. And you haven't got it in you."

Sinestro clenched his teeth behind his lips, wishing that the launderer's words didn't ring with so much truth. He couldn't torture him, even if he really wanted to. How did Green Lanterns get information out of people that didn't respect them? He couldn't just walk away from this lead. This was not covered in his training.

"Why don't you let your pretty sister question me some more?" the man asked, tilting his head to

look at Kida. "I'm sure she has some persuasion techniques."

It was the wink that really got to Sinestro, and he made the green line the curled around the launderer's neck before he formed a rational thought. But once he saw the surprise in the man's eyes as his head snapped up again, he realized he could use this. He waited until he gave a shuddering breath, his bound hands jerking around to try to get to the band. "I'm sure you're familiar with the feeling of asphyxiation," he told him easily, tightening the band enough that the man let out a choking noise. "That lightheaded sensation, the dots before your eyes and the loss of feeling in your extremities."

Sinestro held down the strange thrill he felt at the obvious terror in the man's eyes. At least they understood each other now. "Have you done business with Maligus Sinestro?" he asked, and the man nodded as best he could. "Do you know where we can find him?" The man nodded again, and Sinestro took another step toward him. "I'm going to let you go, and you are going to show us. Understood?" At the man's nod, Sinestro let him drop.

The launderer took in a great gasp of air, rubbing the blooming bruise on his neck before he got up and moved over to his desk. Kida was leaning against the wall within reach of him, watching him through narrowed eyes. "I have the address somewhere," he said, digging in his drawer. "Here it is."

Kida had fast reflexes. She grabbed his gun and twisted it out of his hand quick enough to snap the trigger finger. And once she got the weapon clear, construct bonds wrapped about his wrists and jerked his arms back at painful angles, bending him over the desk. He scrabbled at the floor with his feet as Sinestro silently threatened to dislocate both of his shoulders.

"Alright, alright!" the launderer screeched, but Sinestro didn't release him just yet. "He runs a null ray house on the sunset side of the city. It's an old purple warehouse with no windows on 89th street. You can't miss it! Let me go! You're going to break my arms!"

Sinestro released him, watching as he slid off the desk and onto the floor in a whimpering heap. He looked to Kida, and she was inspecting the man's gun, so he plucked it from her hand and crushed it into worthlessness in a construct. "Come on," he told her, going toward the door.

Outside they were silent for all of two seconds before Kida couldn't contain herself anymore. "So that was the scariest and most amazing thing I have ever witnessed. Is that what Green Lanterns do? You could have killed him or snapped his arms off."

"I could have," Sinestro agreed, a little worried that his sister wasn't more traumatized by witnessing such a thing. "But I wouldn't have. He was never in any danger of disfigurement. I just needed him to believe he was." He swallowed, crossing his arms as they flew toward the sunset side of the city. "Fear is an excellent motivator. I did not enjoy what I needed to put him through."

That was mostly true. He did not actively enjoy putting the man through pain, but he did relish in the control he had given him over him. It was almost worrying feeling that crept into him at the thought of how much compelling fear was. He supposed just appearing in a Green Lantern suit wasn't enough. He needed to build the proper reputation. Then he wouldn't have to hurt people, because they would just think he would.

Sinestro had never seen a null ray machine before, and he was not sure what he had been expecting. But what he found were floating people wrapped in yellow light. Their breathing was raspy and inconsistent, the oxygen in their lungs being pulled from them by the rays to put them on the brink of unconsciousness.

When they found their father, they were both taken aback by how much of a skeleton of a man he

was now. He was hunched over his cane, and he shook when he moved. His eyes and cheeks were sunken in, and his thinning wisps of hair were sticking out at awkward angles. He looked like he had spent a few too many days not eating and hanging in his machines. He saw them and spotted moving, his eyes widening.

Sinestro was glad he didn't try to run, though it wasn't as though he would have been able to get far. He walked right up to him with Kida at his side. "Hello, Father," he told him with an unfriendly look on his face. "I'm only going to ask you once, and I do not care about anything else. Is there anything left of our fortune?"

The old man looked between them, before he shook his head. "No."

Sinestro let out a sigh through his nose, before he rubbed his eyes. "Fine, then I am taking you to the authorities, and this operation of yours is getting shut down. You will repay your debt to us and the public in prison, even if it is the last thing you do." This was significantly less satisfying than he had hoped it would be.

Kida felt the same way. "Wait," he said suddenly. "What if he's lying, Thaal? He could be hiding something from us. Do that thing you did with the launderer. Choke him. Break his arms. Anything. He can't have spent it all. Frighten him into talking."

Sinestro pressed his lips together, before he took her arm and pulled her off to the side and next to one of the machines. "Kida, he is an old and fragile man. I would actually break him if I tried anything like I did with the other man."

"And what's so wrong with that?" Kida spat. "He took everything from us. He deserves torture."

"Kida, no, I will not do this. This is not how you and I will do things."

"Who died and made you head of the family?" she barked at him.

"Mother!" he spat right back.

She jerked as if he'd struck her, and she glared at him, her chin trembling. He went to reach out to her, to embrace her, but she put her hands against his chest and pushed. He stumbled back into the null ray machine chamber, and immediately yellow tendrils wrapped around him, covering his mouth and nose. He tried to struggle, but he could already feel his breath being sucked out of him. He went limp, gasping with twitching fingers, and it was all he could do to keep his eyes open.

"Kida, what are you doing?" their father asked wearily.

"I couldn't let him take you to prison, Father," she replied, turning to him.

Relief washed over the man. "Oh, Kida, I knew you wouldn't fail your father. Come, child, we have to leave before his cycle runs out and he is free." He reached out and took her hand in his. "You were always my favorite. You're so much like me."

She didn't move. "Unfortunately for you, that's quite right." He gave her a quizzical look, before he gasped as he fell when she snatched his cane. "I am just like you, Father." She moved around him, flipping the cane in her hand so that she caught the end and the metal head was opposite. "I don't care who in my family I hurt either as long as I get what I want."

Sinestro clenched his teeth together as he watched, trying to move his fingers. Of course in order to do that, he would have needed to be able to feel them. Right then he could barely feel anything at all. It was getting hard to focus on things, but he would will himself to stay awake.

“Kida,” their father pleaded.

But Kida just shushed him, standing by his legs and pulling up the ratty, dirty hem of his robe with the head of the cane to expose his feet. “I don’t want to hear your begging, Father. I just want to hear your screaming.” She lifted the cane above her head and brought the metal head down on the top of one of his feet.

Maligus Sinestro gave a scream that ended up sobbing, curling up and gingerly reaching for his feet. But Kida wasn’t done. She brought the cane down over and over again onto his feet until they were broken, bloody, unrecognizable messes. The man was crying and drooling on the floor, starting to go into shock from all the pain.

“Don’t pass out yet, Father!” Kida shouted down at him, leaning down to shake his shoulder. “No, you haven’t heard my story yet. Let me tell you about a little girl whose father made her dance and dance until her feet bled. He pushed and pushed and pushed her until she would fall down, and then he would yell at her. He called her weak! He called her pathetic! He said she would never amount to anything if she didn’t practice for hours and hours all day long! And then after her mother saved her, he ignored her. She had given him everything she could, only wanting him to be proud of her, and he couldn’t care less.”

She lifted the cane up and brought the head down on his knee. The crack was earsplitting, and his scream was worse. “You never gave a damn about your children, Father! And I hate you! I hate you!” She screamed of her hate repeatedly as she rendered their father’s knees to splintered disarray.

By then their father was quaking, the drool having turned to foam in his mouth, and his eyes had gone far away. Kida gazed down at him, panting. It was obvious by her expression that she was not finished. She had not yet gotten her revenge. “I always wished you had died instead of mother,” she told him, touching the bloody head of the cane to his sharp cheekbone. “But the only reason she was targeted was because she made her ideas known to the world. She was powerful. All you ever did was hide in your study, you coward.”

When she lifted up the cane again, Sinestro wanted to scream out for her to stop, but he could barely summon enough oxygen to cough. The vision of a skull splitting open was a shockingly familiar one, and he could only watch as she rendered their father’s head into a collection of blood, meat and bone. She put her heel on his neck, using that as leverage to dislodge the cane from his eye socket.

She tossed the cane away and went to wipe her face, but her entire front and hands were splattered with purple blood and she couldn’t. She staggered when she walked over to the null ray machine that had Sinestro captive, pressing a couple buttons that released him.

He crumpled to the ground, swallowing lungfuls of air and flicking his eyes over to the bloody mess that was their father. Before he even tried to get up, he summoned a containing construct that put Kida against the floor. She didn’t even try to struggle, instead just laid there placidly as he managed to get to his feet. This entire operation had gone sideways on him so fast that it was practically a blur and he wasn’t sure if he could believe it. His father’s death was very real, however, and so was Kida’s betrayal.

He had thought he could trust her, but now he knew that he was going to have to be a lot more picky on who he chose to have at his side.

He notified the authorities and waited for them to show up before he flew his sister off to get her booked for murder himself. She was silent the entire time through processing, like she couldn’t take in the brutality of her own actions. When she was about to be taken to a holding cell, she grabbed his hand in her own, covered in dried blood as they were.

"I don't want to meet my attorney looking like this," she told him, turning her wide eyes up to him. "Can you please go to our grandparents' home and get me a dress?" When he took in a breath to protest, she squeezed his hand. "Please, Thaal."

He let out a sigh through his nose but nodded, letting the officers take her as he turned and went out to take to the sky. When he arrived at his grandparents' property and went inside, his grandmother gave him a concerned look and asked why Kida wasn't with him. That was one of the hardest explanations he ever had to give. He thought she might faint at first, but eventually she steadied herself and went to get a dress for him.

As he flew back to the station, he felt cold. It was a similar feeling he had felt when his mother had died. It was the exact same feeling he had had when he had flown away from Tul's sacrifice. Things kept happening around him, and he couldn't stop them. All he could do was grasp at them. He needed more control than this. He hated feeling so helpless.

He landed at the station, and the hair on his arms lifted up. The air was a buzz, tingling around him. Officers were leaning on the furniture, floor and walls. He stepped over to one of them, kneeling down and turning him towards him. "What happened?" he asked him in a sharp voice.

The officer winced, clutching a black burn on his abdomen. "Your sister, she..." He took in a ragged breath. "We were putting her in her cell, and lightning came out of her hands. She has magic. She's a witch!"

Sinestro's eyes widened, and he gently laid down the officer before he went further into the station. "Do you have surveillance of her escape?" he asked a startled looking officer, and when he nodded, he barked, "Show me!"

Kida wasn't even cuffed as the two officers escorted her to a cell. They must not have thought her a threat. She had definitely looked small and harmless, except when she turned as they were closing the cell door. The officers flew back, bright blue-white, jagged streams of electricity slamming them into the opposite wall. She stepped out of the cell, and her eyes were sparking. She lifted her hand, and lightning flew from the tips of her fingers, flooring the officers that came at her.

She made a blinding shield, pushing them back as they fired at her, and she put them all on the ground as she walked calmly through the hall and the lobby, traversing the view of four security cameras as she went. One more caught her walk outside, and then lightning cracked on her location. She was gone.

Sinestro put his elbows on the back of the officers chair and buried his face in his hands. "She played me," he growled to himself. She didn't need him to be her muscle. She could have easily protected herself against anything. But she had needed to save her magic as a gambit. Everything she had done was calculated. And now she was going to get away.



# A Minor Inconvenience To Some

## Chapter Summary

Sinestro is quick to recognize the imperfections of the power ring.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Sinestro stood before the Council confidently, his hands behind his back and his chin up high. If he could stand before the Guardians of the universe unflinchingly, then staring up at the members of his planet's government was practically a casual encounter. He had presented more suggestions for the improvement of the city for approval, and he was resisting the urge to boredly examine his nails as they chatted mutely amongst themselves.

The council speaker turned to him again, concern on his face. "This council appreciates your ideas, Green Lantern Sinestro, but we are worried that they may be too radical for the citizens of Whonere."

He had anticipated this and took it in stride. "I understand your hesitation, councilman, but what I am proposing is not a change that can take place overnight. You have seen for yourselves the decline in crime such as null ray establishments, illegal weapon trafficking, and theft in the past months just because I am here. It is not because I have made all the arrests or chased down every criminal myself, but because my presence is respected. They fear me. And they would fear increased police presence and the other policies I have suggested. It may take years, but through these measure I do believe that Whonere can find true peace."

The members of the Council glanced at each other, mumbling, before the speaker said, "Then we will take your suggestions under serious advisement."

Sinestro gave a diplomatic smile. "That is all I can hope for."

Walking out of the court house, he felt a sense of accomplishment. He waved back at an eager young girl then lifted off the ground to fly back to his home. He now lived in an apartment in a tower at the center of the city, a gift from a very grateful and very persuasive real estate agent. He had saved her from falling to her death when she'd tumbled from an unsteady scaffolding when the tower was under construction. He flew inside and sat down on his long rounded couch with a sigh.

It was only mid-day and despite the fact he had been awake since very early morning, he still had a full night of patrolling ahead. So he leaned forward and held his ring against his power battery, which was resting on the short table in front of him. As he said his oath, he felt the familiar though always unsettling sensation of power creeping up his arm.

As he flew out and up through the atmosphere, he pondered, as he had many times, the object of charging the rigs. He had asked many questions of Abin Sur and had studied it thoroughly, learning that they acted as a kind of conduit of willpower and needed to be charged in order to do so. But he would have thought the Guardians would be continuously improving on their greatest weapons. Needing to recharge his ring so constantly was inconvenient. He had on more than one occasion been out in space when his ring warned him that the power was below 10%. Never had he been in

danger, as he was not reckless, but it still annoyed him endlessly.

After a bit of silent flying through space with the thought on his mind, he gave up and brought his ring to his face. "Green Lantern Sinestro to Analysis Expert Salaak," he said, stopping to hover in the emptiness.

A few moments later, a little projection of Salaak from the chest up appeared in bright green. "Salaak answering Green Lantern Sinestro, go ahead," he replied.

"I have a query about the power rings and their power capacity. Is there an alternate and more effective method of charging a ring that allows it to sustain power for a longer amount of time than usual?" Sinestro asked evenly, knowing that if anyone would have any kind of extra information, it would be Salaak.

Salaak's head tilted just barely. "The only time I have heard of rings being charge beyond normal is when a Lantern long passed, one of the first of the Corps, over-charged his ring at the central power battery in a time of great need. It is written in the Book of Oa that thought he fought off the evil threatening Oa, his ring and body were put under great strain, and he died shortly after."

"I see," Sinestro mused.

"If this is a true problem for you, I would suggest bringing it up to the Guardians themselves. They are always interesting in correcting any issues that the Corps may face." He paused for a second as annoyance crossed his face. "Given that said issues are not about the quality of the food in the cafeteria of the personal entertainment in the Lantern quarters."

Sinestro could tell Salaak must have been whined at a lot. "Yes, I would like to meet with the Guardians."

"Go about your business, and I will contact you when they are available." Salaak shut the communication down without a farewell, and Sinestro appreciated that.

"I am not a festivities kind of person," Sinestro told Abin Sur over the ring's line as he flew toward Oa a few days later, the handle of his power battery in his other hand.

"I know, but the Winter Festival is a great experience. Other than that, you have never been to Ungara while I've been all over Korugar," Abin Sur replied easily.

"Are you trying to guilt me, Abin?"

"Of course I am!" Abin Sur gave a hearty laugh. "Is it working?"

Sinestro rolled his eyes, because yes it was. He set down on Oa's surface before answering, "Alright, fine. When is it?" he asked.

"Two months almost, by the main Oan solar calender. It's just a little while after your first anniversary as a Green Lantern, so we can celebrate that then too."

Sinestro made a face at the suggestion. Anniversaries weren't celebrated on Korugar. Lasting a year wasn't a big achievement, while doing something during that year was. Oh well, he couldn't very well crush his friend's hopes, so he just gave a grunt of agreement. "Fine, Abin. Now if you don't mind, I have some business with the Guardians."

"Ah yes, your pet project. Well, I will leave you to it. I will see you later for our scouting mission." The communication cut off.

Sinestro huffed to himself as he walked toward the Guardians Chamber. They had finally deemed his request for audience worthy, and he had a full speech prepared for when they asked him what he wanted. Salaak nodded to him as he walked past, pressing a button to open the doors to the chamber and allow him entrance.

“The Guardians recognize Green Lantern Sinestro of sector 1417,” Appa Ali Apsa said as he walked into the chamber and nodded his head in greeting. “Green Lantern Salaak has informed us of the gist of your issue. Please elaborate for us.”

“Of course,” Sinestro said, shifting his weight on his feet and putting his hands behind his back. The action put the power battery against his butt, and he tried not to feel strange about that. “The limits of the power ring has become a hindrance in my efforts to patrol my sector. I constantly need to return to my home to charge it. And carrying my power battery in space is unwise and would limit my mobility, as well as give an enemy an advantage over me should they take it from me.”

The Guardians glanced at one another, before Appa Ali Apsa looked back at him. “What do you suggest?”

“I suggest that perhaps, in your infinite wisdom, that the limit on charging our rings is removed so that we can all function more efficiently as your Corps.” He brought the power battery up next to him. “that way we could be less dependent on these.”

Appa Ali Apsa lifted a brow, before he said. “The limit as to which the rings can be charged is there for a reason. Lanterns of old have wounded themselves, sometime fatally, by charging their rings too much and putting a high strain on their bodies. I'm afraid your suggestion cannot be taken into consideration.”

Sinestro was about to say something else, but the Guardian held up a hand. “However we do recognize the problem and will think on it. We do thank you for bringing it to us, Green Lantern Sinestro.”

Tilting his head down in a nod and slight bow, he tried not to smile. The Guardians agreed with him. That was something to be proud of himself for. Hopefully they would go through with their oath to look into the issue. “Thank you, Guardians of the Universe. I am very grateful for your consideration on this matter.”

After leaving the chamber, he went to his room in the Lantern quarters area and charged his ring again, before he contacted Abin. “I have finished talking to the Guardians,” he told him over the ring's line.

“Oh good, any news on that front?” Abin replied.

“Not yet, but they didn't immediately dismiss my issue, so that is as good of news as any,” he said, heading out of the Lantern quarters and flying up. “Where are you? I'm ready to go on our mission now if you are.”

“I'm in the cafeteria, just got finished eating. Have you eaten recently? If not maybe you should, because I don't know how long this mission will last.”

“I'm fine, Abin,” Sinestro informed him with a roll of his eyes, flying toward the cafeteria to meet up with his friend.

Abin was just coming out when he arrived, and the man took his hand in a shake. “We're on a scouting mission, so we're just off to check something out that's been reported to the Corps.”

“What exactly are we after exactly?” Sinestro asked as they lifted off and started their flight, cracking through the sound barrier before they broke through the atmosphere and Oa's orbit.

“I'm not exactly sure. An anomaly's been reported at these coordinates,” Abin said, transferring the numbers into Sinestro's ring. “So it could be anything, which is why they sent two of us out here to check it out. If it's something truly odd, they want us to be able to back up each other's stories about it.”

“What if we both end up mad and rambling?” Sinestro asked with a scoff, seeing all kinds of holes in this plan.

“Then they'll believe neither of us, but I wouldn't worry about it. I think that you have something in your mind that prevents madness. Me, not so much, but at least one of us will stay sane in the face of a mind altering experience.”

It took a second for Sinestro to realize that Abin was joking, so he didn't bark at him that that was nothing to make light of. Abin could turn anything into a humorous compliment, a skill he was uniquely capable of. In a way he liked this ability, but it also made him flustered because Abin tended to insert a joke into a serious conversation at random.

"Yes well," Sinestro said with a huff. "I doubt your confidence in my brain's ability, but I will take the compliment anyway."

"That's all I can ask," Abin told him brightly, before he moved a bit closer into Sinestro's personal space and out his hand on his shoulder. "Now, I wanted to talk to you about something personal."

Oh no. Sinestro loathed these talks, because he was so very uncomfortable with releasing any personal information. "Go ahead," he told him flatly.

“How are you handling your sister's disappearance?” Abin asked him, squeezing his shoulder as he did so.

Sinestro somehow managed not to wiggle away, already completely uncomfortable with this conversation. “Fine,” he said, because what else was he supposed to say? He hadn't seen Kida in months, and it's not like that was really any different from the norm. Just now she was a wanted criminal and he was an esteemed planetary hero.

“Just fine?” Abin asked him, dropping his hand from his shoulder and going to fly backwards a little in front of him so he'd have to look at him. “If my sister disappeared, I'd spare no effort in finding her.”

“Well my sister very much does not want to be found. She is as determined as anyone in my family, and I cannot blame her. Witchcraft is illegal on my planet, and she is a known murderer. If she doesn't want to be found, then I won't be able to find her.” She was as crafty as could be too. It was possible she had planned the murder of their father and her escape for a long time, and she had it all down to the letter.

“You looked for ages already, didn't you?” Abin asked, backing off and going back to his side. Sinestro thought he was going to touch him again, but thankfully he didn't. “It's just that if it were my sister, I'd be going out of my mind.”

“Your relationship with your sister far differs from the relationship I have with mine,” Sinestro told him with a frown, before he glanced at his ring and slowed to a hover. The coordinates were right, but there was nothing around. “Are you sure this is the right place, Abin?” he asked as he turned

around again and tried to spot some destination.

“Pretty sure,” Abin Sur replied, doing the same as we was. There were planets around them, but none close enough to give such a margin in error.



Sinestro 'hm'ed to himself, continuing to look around. He paused when he noticed something, a strange rift in the space like the stars were converging on each other then spreading out again. “Abin,” he said, reaching back and patting his shoulder lightly to get his attention. “Look at that.”

“What is that?” he asked as he floated next to Sinestro. They continued to watching the anomaly, studying how the almost planet sized circle drifting towards them, the stars rolling over it. They only completely understood when they saw themselves, first tiny and then bigger. “A reflection shield,” Abin Sur said first, before he drew back and made a huge construct of a hand in a stop gesture. Immediately the thing stopped.

Sinestro wasn't sure if it was a drifting planet or a ship until the reflection panels pulled back to form a hole. Definitely a ship. They flew in, and the panels closed behind them. There was a group to meet them, all winged aliens with blasters holstered to their hips and thighs. But the way they greeted them was friendly.

“Welcome, Green Lanterns to our ship, the Disappearance, it's a surprise to see you hear. We have never had a Green Lantern board our ship before. We hope that we have not done something to warrant an arrest being made,” said the main alien, flapping a little closer and extending his hands in a peaceful manner.

“Oh, no, nothing like that,” Abin Sur assured them, looking around them at the bustling city set on a rounded metal plate. “We have just received a few reports about an anomaly in this area and just wanted to come and check it out.”

“Oh, yes, I see. We try to say in this area, since none of the nearby planets are inhabited. We only had to warn one ship away as they were about to run right into our cloaking shield.” The main alien put his hands together loosely in front of him.

“Why do you require a cloaking device?” Sinestro asked, looking up at the artificial sky.

“The people that come and go here like a kind of discretion,” said the leader of the small alien pack.

The immediately made Sinestro suspicious, and apparently it did the same for Abin Sur, because he said, “Are there any activities happening there that are banned by the intergalactic trading laws?”

“Oh no!” the alien said, shaking his head and waving his hands. “We adhere closely to the letter of the law. As far as we are aware, no one on this ship is directly connected to any illegal activity.” That sounded like an excuse, but before either of them could say anything, he went on. “People come here to start over, to disappear.”

Abin Sur and Sinestro looked at one another. “Fitting name then,” Sinestro told them.

The aliens showed them around. The city was busy and full of markets, flying cars and every kind of different species of alien that could exist. Well Sinestro didn't see any Korugarians, but he wasn't surprised on that front. After being given the tour, they left the Disappearance.

“Well, that was interesting,” Abin Sur told him, before he shook his head. “There's no need for the both of us to report in. This situation is boringly believable.”

“I still believe that some kind of illegal activity must be going on in that ship,” Sinestro crossed his arms.

“You and me both, my friend,” Abin Sur said with a smile and nod, before he clapped Sinestro on the shoulder. “I will report to the guardians. You can get back to your personal quest.”

“There is nothing I can do now without the Guardians's input,” he said as he turned with Abin Sur back toward Oa. They jumped into their fastest speed of flight within moments.

“It will not take them long to come to some conclusion,” Abin Sur told him confidentially.

“I hope not,” Sinestro replied, and the rest of the flight was quiet.

Sinestro grabbed his power battery from the quarters as Abin Sur went to report in, and he started the long trek home. He made an itinerary on what he needed to get done. He had to check his messages at home to see if the Council needed his insight on anything. And he needed to go to the universities—all of them, but he would start with one for today—and check on the research of the ruins out in the barren zone. Last he had heard newer, fresher ruins had been uncovered. He had yet to go them out himself, but he would be able to now.

He saw them immediately upon entering the city of Whonere, and he stopped in a hover, his hand coming to his mouth in surprise. Banners, everywhere. White ones with the Green Lantern symbol on them. People were dancing in the streets. He had completely forgotten the Day of Remembrance, the first day of the Mortality Reminiscence was today. He didn't participate in the activities usually.

But this time he spotted someone in the crowd. She looked right back up at him, before she turned and dashed into an alley, pulling her hood more firmly over her head. “Kida!” he hissed, getting over his shock and shooting off after her. He saw the tail end of her cloak disappear into a building and he dropped down by the door, stepping inside and looking around.

It was dark, almost too dark to be natural, and he lit up what he could with his ring. This was the first time he'd seen hide or tail of his sister in months. She had done well to keep out of the public, but the festivities must have drawn her out. She had loved the festival, had even danced in a few while she was in college. She was probably disappointed to see her brother of all people.

Sinestro tried not to think about that as he continued to look for her. His green light flashed off her eyes, and all of the sudden all was lightning, hitting the rafters above his head and bringing the ceiling down on top of him. He put up a dome that kept him safe, but when the dust cleared, she was

gone again. He gave a frustrated cough.

It was six days before the Guardians contacted him with what they said was a solution to his problem, and they wanted him to bring his power battery. As he left his tower, he glanced around the celebrating throng in hopes that he might catch another glimpse of his sister. It was the last day of the celebration, and he could always hope. Unfortunately Kida was no where in sight, and he lifted out of the atmosphere with a sigh.

Salaak held out a hand for him to stop when he reached the Chamber, and he did so with slight irritation, though he kept his face blank. "The Guardians are still discussing a matter that they need a moment for." He gestured for Sinestro to sit, which he did, before he busied himself with the control panel floating in front of him again. After a few moments, he said, "I do hope that the Guardians have found a way to remedy your issue. It would assist many a Green Lantern if they did."

Sinestro nodded to him. "I hope so too. It's an inconvenience that has interrupted my patrolling, and that is part of my purpose as a Green Lantern."

"Quite," Salaak said, before silence stretched between them again.

As Sinestro pondered how much he approved of Salaak's conversational skills, the minimalistic take on communicating, he held his power battery in his lap and looked it over, searching for any imperfections. Most of the power battery was flawless, but there was a tiny dent on the bottom rim, and he rubbed over it with his thumb. It bothered him, and he longed to figure out a way to fix it. Perhaps as an extension of his ring, he could simply will it? He tried, and nothing happened, and that annoyed him.

And then Salaak announced that he could go in now, so she stood and walked into the chamber as the tall doors opened for him. The Guardians were waiting for him on their floating platform, looking imposing and stern. Every time Sinestro met them, he felt as though they might scold him. But he pushed that feeling down and bowed his head to them. "Greetings, Guardians of the Universe."

"Green Lantern Sinestro of 1417 is recognized," Appa Ali Apsa said with a curt nod, before he floated down from the platform to be eye to eye with Sinestro. "We have given your issue due consideration, and we have come up with a solution that will work for you and not compromise your health or that of the Corps by adjusting the power levels of the rings." He held out one of his miniature hands, and Sinestro released his power battery as it pulled toward the Guardian. "We have discovered a compromise."

Appa Ali Apsa held his other hand out to the side, and a swirl of black opened up a hole in existence itself. And without saying a word the Guardian placed the power battery inside this hole, his arm disappearing up to the elbow. When he pulled his arm out, the hole disappeared, and Sinestro fought to keep a calm face as he freaked out on the inside about his power battery being put somewhere he couldn't even understand.

"We call them pocket dimensions," Appa Ali Apsa explained, spreading his hands. Then he pointed to Sinestro's ring hand. "We have already installed the proper technology to access these pocket dimensions into the rings of the Corps. All you need to do with will it to open and reach inside for your power battery."

Sinestro stared at him for a second, before he looked at his ring. He brought his hand up at his side, palm out and fingers spread. He didn't need to endeavor or worry about whether he was doing it right, because the moment he thought about it the black portal opened up. He reached out, touching the blackness with the tips of his fingers. It was so cold it felt like a bite, and he had to put all his

effort into not pulling back. He forced his hand inside the hole, feeling something hit his palm. He curled his hand around it and pulled his it out. It was the handle of his power battery.

He let out a breath had hadn't known he was holding at he gawked at it, before he looked at Appa Ali Apsa, then at the rest of the Guardians. "Thank you," he said, too awed to hate how breathy he sounded.

"We would like to give you the responsibility to teach the rest of the Lanterns to access their pocket dimensions," said another Guardians as he floated down closer to him, setting his hand on Sinestro's shoulder. He believed his name was Ganthet. "We are of one mind in believing that you are capable of this task. And we believe that you will continue to be an exemplary model of a Green Lantern." There was warmth in his smile, unlike the way that Appa Ali Apsa spoke to him.

There weren't many time in his life when Sinestro was speechless, but this was one.

## Chapter End Notes

Eesh, sorry it took me so long to get this chapter out. I was going through some stuff that stunted my creativity. (I wrote porn instead.) Thanks for being patient. And thank you Mari, for drawing that silly picture and inspiring something that will be big in the next chapter.



# An Ending and New Beginning

## Chapter Summary

Thaal Sinestro finds Kida again. And Abin Sur introduces him to a very special lady.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

After the Mortality Reminiscence, all of the banners around of Whonere depicting the Green Lantern symbol were taken down except for one. This one hung from the tower in which Sinestro lived on the north corner, long, pristine white and nearly touching the ground. It was secured tightly so it didn't swing into nearby buildings. The best part about it was when the morning light hit it, it became translucent, and Sinestro could gaze through the middle of the symbol as he drank his morning tea. Even after over a month it was originally hung up, it gave him a sense of peace.

He imagined that the people of Whonere could look upon it and feel that they were under the wise protection and guidance of a Green Lantern. They were safe; Sinestro made sure of it. Most people waved at him when he flew over the streets, especially the children. There were some that looked up at him with distrust in their eyes, and he wanted to talk to them, show them that he existed as a peacemaker, but he didn't dare. Everyone was entitled to an opinion, even if it was incorrect.

He had a meeting with the Council and then the commissioners of the police precincts, of which there were now ten of them for the city. The police presence had increased, in turn lower the amount of overt crime, but there was still more that could be done. The meeting with the Council was as he expected. They spent about an hour telling him he was right. Even though he had been well aware of how his plans for the city would change it for the better, his ego swelled to hear it said.

Of course it was the correct path for Whonere. It was his mother's idea.

The meeting with the commissioners went about the same way. They thanked him for convincing the Council to give them more funding, and he told them it was nothing that wasn't deserved. One man pulled him to the side as the meeting drew to a close, looking anxious as he had through the whole meeting.

"I would speak with you, please, Green Lantern," he said.

"Speak freely," Sinestro told him with a furrowed brow. He hoped this wasn't about the man getting a raise, because that was both not his responsibility or his problem. He'd reviewed the payments to the law enforcement members already and had deemed them fair. It was in the hands of the Council now.

"There has been word about your sister," the man told him in a hushed tone. "She was spotted fleeing the scene of a null ray house we raided two days ago. I did not send any men after her because of all the damage she caused to the men of the 2nd district."

"And you are only just tell me now? The trail has undoubtedly gone cold by now, so what use is this information?" Sinestro asked with a growl creeping into his voice. Fool.

“No, no, sir, that is the thing. I have put my men on high alert for her, and they are supposed to message me as soon as she is spotted. One of my undercover men in the 7th district's underground just sent me word not two hours ago that she is overseeing the move of null ray devices to a new location.”

“Give me all the information you have and tell you men to stay behind. I will handle my sister,” Sinestro told him firmly.

As if turned out, the information that the man gave him was correct. Sinestro landed on the roof of a building and crept to the edge, peering over it in a crouch to see several men moving nondescript boxes into a warehouse with his sister giving them orders. Seeing her made his chest tight. A small part of him still couldn't believe that she had become this and was carrying on their father's legacy as a drug dealer. She could have been so much more. She was made of the same kind of greatness he was.

But that didn't stop her being a witch, which was illegal and punishable by death. He planned on taking her off world, because he knew the only reason the death penalty was instituted for magic users was because they could not be held by anything that Korugar currently had available. The science cells would be a good place to hold Kida. Life in prison was better than death for her.

As they finished loading things into the warehouse and shut the wide door at the front, Sinestro dropped down into the side alley and hurried to the side of the building. He set his hand on the handle of a side door and took in a breath, before he slowly pushed it down and opened the door and peek in. Everyone was busy setting up, and Kida was barking orders at them, pointing this was and that. If she could keep junkies and criminals in line, imagine was she could have done if she had joined criminal justice like he had suggested nearly a year ago.

He curled his ring hand into his fist, before he counted to three in his head and burst into the door, sending out a line that wrapped around her feet and brought her to the ground. She screamed for the men around her to defend her. Some ran, presumably not wanting to deal with a Green Lantern. Others brought out guns and fired at him, almost too fast for him to bring up a shield. He sent out blunt projectiles, knocking them down as he dragged his sister toward him. Her lightning hit his shield, ripping cracks through it.

The line he had around her ankles looped up her body, trapping her around against her. She could barely even struggle. She waved the dust from his vision as he walked over to her, standing next to her. She stopped moving, her black hair all over her face. She blew from strands away from her mouth and stared up at him with a haughty look. “Hello, Thaal,” she said simply.

He frowned down at her, before the construct around her lifted her off the ground, and he walked her out the side of the building. In the front street, the men were getting stuffed into police cars, all cursing and pleading. He ignored them, lifting and flying straight up and out into the atmosphere. A green aura covered his body and Kida's head, protecting them from death.

What it didn't protect him from was her talking. “Can you at least let me tell you why I did what I did?” she asked him, and he almost didn't want to respond at all.

“I know what you killed our father, Kida. It's obvious.”

“No, Thaal, you don't know everything. You didn't see him when he was absorbed in his work. He didn't hit you in the back of the knee with his cane when you missed a step. He never told you that if you couldn't be perfect then you were worthless. He was an animal, and he deserved to be put down like one,” she told him, and her tone was scarily even as she said it, as if she had this in her head for

a long time.

Sinestro turned to her with a frown on his face. "His crimes were apparent, Kida, but you had no right deciding he was guilty and going through with your own sentencing. There were other things that I wanted from him. I wanted to know what investments he sank our fortune into. I wanted to see if I could get any of it back, for the both of us. Now we'll never know."

"He said there was nothing left," Kida responded, and she probably would have crossed her arms if she could. "You would be content in chasing ghosts while the man that ruined our legacy sits in a cell and gets taken care of. He gets away with it, and you don't want him to suffer?"

"What you did to him was not giving him suffering. She checked out from the pain well before you were finished talking to him about your revenge, about how he treated you. What you did was take your aggression and pain out on him. You just wanted him dead, long before I came to tell you that I was going to find him."

Kida didn't respond to that, instead turned her head away with a 'hmpf' so he looked forward and decided to ignore her for the rest of the trip. His thoughts went inward. So this was how his family was to be? His mother assassinated. His father insane and dead. And his sister a murderer capable of magic. Was this the price of greatness for himself, that his immediate family fell into ruin? It wasn't fair.

He wanted to be able to give his sister a chance, but he knew that life in prison was the standard for murder. He was saving her from execution, but he wasn't sure if she would be much happier spending the remainder of her life on Oa. Perhaps they would be lenient on her since the man she killed had been her childhood tormenter and a criminal himself.

"Thaal, look ahead of you!" his sister cried, and he snapped out of his thoughts just in time to jerk out of the way as a tiny blue comet whizzed through the place he had been flying.

He turned to look after it, wondering where it had come from. Then it turned, slowing down, and he got a good look at it. It was a blue insect, a scarab. The Reach. He immediately shot at it with his ring, and the beams bounced right off its shell. It was coming in hot, and he narrowly dodged it again. He deflected it on a shield as it came back. Then he pinged it away with a slapping hand construct. Each time the scarab just spun out, stopped, and returned. Sinestro had no idea what it wanted, but whatever it was it was not going to get it.

It was when it zoomed at Kida and he bashed it away with a giant hammer that she let out a shriek. "Thaal! Thaal, let me help!" she cried at him, and he dismissed her, because he didn't want her getting hurt.

"Absolutely not, Kida, this is not your fight!" he barked at her, and he saw sparks go off in her eyes.

"Don't be so stubborn! I can help you, you idiot!" she snapped back, baring her teeth as the construct she was being held in jerked quickly to the side.

"Just because you know a little magic doesn't mean you can fight an enemy like this," he told her, catching hold of it in a fist and tossing it out as far as he could. He could win this fight. Even if he couldn't disable it. All he had to do was outlast it.

But this thing just kept coming and coming, endlessly and tirelessly, unlike him. He would eventually run out of energy. "Free my arms, right now!" she screamed at him, and he could think of nothing but to obey her.

Her lightning was fierce, and it hit the little scarab with no mercy. It screamed a little scream of static and high pitched frequencies. It stopped completely, floating on its back with its little legs twitching. For good measure, Kida zapped it again, and the twitched stopped. He floated close to it wearily, bringing Kida with him, before he poked it. It dig a little lifeless turn in the zero gravity, and he took a firm hold of it and turned it every which way.

“What is it?” Kida asked, reaching forward to set her hands on his arm to pull herself closer.

“It's from an intergalactic agency of planet killers called the Reach,” he told her, putting his finger tip against the tip of one of its little legs and moving it back and forth. It was definitely completely dead, or offline, whatever the case may be. “Remember the deity that the Ascolians worshiped? It was one of these things. It's the reason Korugar is a barren waste. They suck all the nutrients and life out of a planet and then move on.”

“That's terrifying,” she told him softly, reaching over to touch it, but he moved it out of her reach before she could. Instead he placed it inside his pocket dimension, a display that surprised Kida. “What have you done with it?”

“I've stored it until I can take it to the Guardians of the Universe. To my knowledge they do not have a specimen like this already,” he told her as the hole closed.

“And me? What do you plan to do with me?” Kida asked, her voice soft as she gripped his arm, her fingers trembling a little. She could have shocked him and gotten free, but nothing would have saved her from the vacuum of space. Her face broke his heart.

He sighed softly and lifted his hand to touch her face, to move a loose lock of hair behind her pointed ear. “There is a prison on Oa that I'm taking you too. They're called the Science Cells.” She was already turning her face away as he spoke. “It's either that or execution on Korugar. Would you prefer to die?”

“I would rather die than be held captive my whole life,” she told him quietly, before she put her hand over his and looked back into his eyes. “Thaal, just let me go.”

“Kida--”

“No, you know our father's crimes, and you know he deserved death for how he treated us, before and after our mother's death. He was a monster. I don't want to hurt anyone else. I only wanted to be at peace, and I am, Thaal, I swear it. I only want to get on with my life. I want to disappear.” She squeezed his hand against her cheek. “Please, Thaal.”

He stared into her eyes, so like their mother's that it was haunting, before he let out a breath through his nose. “If you want to disappear, I may have a way for you to do that.”

Kida was just as confused as he and Abin Sur had been when they came to the coordinates of the cloaked ship, but her gasp of excitement did make him smile as he flew in to land on a dock, releasing her from the construct. She didn't run off right away, instead looked around in interest at all the different types of aliens meandering this way and that.

“This ship is called the Disappearance,” he told her simply, and she looked at him. “I can't vouch for the quality of the company you'll have here, but I am sure you will be able to find a way to start a new life here.” He reached into his pocket dimension and pulled out a sack of coinage, just handing her the whole thing. “I want you to be happy, Kida.”

Kida took the money and looked at him with a sad expression on her face. “And you know what this

means?" she asked, her voice cracked on the last word. He simply nodded to her, and she launched herself at him, wrapping her arms around his shoulders and standing on her toes. "Thank you, big brother," she whispered to him as he squeezed her to his chest. "I love you, and I'm so proud of you."

He let her step out of his embrace, and he smiled a pained little smile when she blew him a kiss, before she drew up her hood and walked down the dock to disappear into the throng of people. As he watched her vanish, he knew that, this time, he truly would never see her again. It was a bittersweet feeling.

"This is amazing, Green Lantern Sinestro," Ganthet told him as he handed over the scarab to the Guardians. "With this knowledge we will be able to better protect the universe from the Reach. The Guardians and the Corps owe you their thanks."

Sinestro felt his ego swell to the burst point, but he just shook his head. "No thanks required. I was only doing my duty as a Green Lantern. If it will help, then that is the accomplishment I seek."

The Guardians seemed pleased with that response.

Outside the chamber Abin Sur greeted him, taking his hand in a shake. "Are you ready to celebrate your anniversary as a Green Lantern and see Ungara's Winter Festival?" They walked out into the fresh air.

"I am, my friend, but there is one other anniversary I must see to before I can go. If you would please wait for me, I won't be long," Sinestro told him as he lifted off the ground. The flight was short since it was still on Oa, and as he walked into the high ceiling's room, Morro turned to regard him. He gave him a curt nod, before he flew up and floated right in front of Tul's statue.

"I almost cannot believe it has been a year since your death," she told her in a solemn voice, reaching out and setting his hand on her ring hand, rubbing his thumb over the face of the ring. "I hope you know that without your sacrifice, we all would have died. Not just our group but probably most of the Corps as well. You were the bravest of us all, and we didn't even get to thank you. So I'm here to do just that. Thank you, Tul." He put his hand on the side of her face, before he floated back and away from her.

She had a permanent place in his heart.

Abin Sur was waiting outside the memorial chamber for him, and he didn't say a word, though he undoubtedly knew what he had done and didn't say a word about it, instead turning toward the skies. "I believe that you will enjoy this festival even though you have said, time and time again, that you are not the kind to celebrate things. When you are in the throes of the festival, you will feel it, and you will enjoy it."

Sinestro was not exactly feeling in the celebrating spirit as he flew along side his friend, of course he never felt in that spirit, but he was in an especially gloomy mood as they came upon Ungara. He wasn't sure if he was prepared for how different the planet was from Korugar. It was a lush planet of green and blue, and there were flowers everywhere. Also it wasn't even remotely cold.

"I thought winter festivals were celebrated during winter?" he drawled to his friend, looking around like he was unimpressed but actually it was quite the opposite. He had only ever read about jungle and waterfalls, but here he could witness them first hand. He wanted to go exploring, to unearth this planet's history. He wanted to lock himself away in the museums and universities to read for hours. He had a feeling Abin Sur wouldn't appreciate that though.

“Our Festival takes place on the day before the cold comes in. It's our way of celebrating the kind weather we've had and welcome in the chill that will give us life next spring.” He led him toward a glittering, pulsing group of people dancing in the middle of a large city square. The moment the music hit him, he understood what Abin Sur had meant when he said it was infectious.

It was fast with a deep beat, one that smacked him in the chest like a heavy hand and sped up his heart rate with excitement. He landed on the outskirts of the dancers, watching them spin, jump and gyrate. The first thing that struck Sinestro was how little clothes they were wearing. The men were wearing only pairs of pants with sashes about their waist with tassels. The women were covered where it counts, but their sleeves and legs of their pants were sheer and slit up the sides. None of them were wearing shoes.

The dancing wasn't precise. It could have even been called wild, all swinging limbs and whipping hair, but somehow they all didn't end up in a pained pile in the middle. They were so aware of one another even as they gave themselves over to the music. It moved them like they were vessels for it. Their eyes were far away, and sweat slid down their pink skin in such a strangely appealing way. Sinestro could only watch, transfixed.

When the song ended, the square became a waving mass of laughter and touching hands. As the dancers set up for the next song, one woman noticed them and smiled brightly. For a moment Sinestro wanted to compare it to sunshine but resisted, because that was perfectly silly. Her hair was a mass of curls with two braids wrapped about her head like a crown. She walked over to them, looking so casually elegant with her swaying purple fabric.

“Abin,” she said, lifting up on her toes to kiss his cheek as he put his arm around her.

“Hello, Arin,” he told her, before he turned her toward Sinestro with pride glowing on his features. “Sinestro, this is my sister, Arin Sur.”

“Oh, I know who you are,” Arin Sur said, stepping forward to take his hand in hers. He had forgotten what language was as he gazed at her, his mouth working wordlessly. “Your reputation proceeds you. That, and Abin absolutely will not shut up about you. I'm surprised it took him this long to get you here.”

“I've been trying for a year, sister,” Abin told them with a roll of his blue eyes. Speaking of eyes, they did have the very same eyes. They looked quite a bit alike, now he looked between them. She was just soft where he was angled. And she had a total chaos collection of hair where he had nothing.

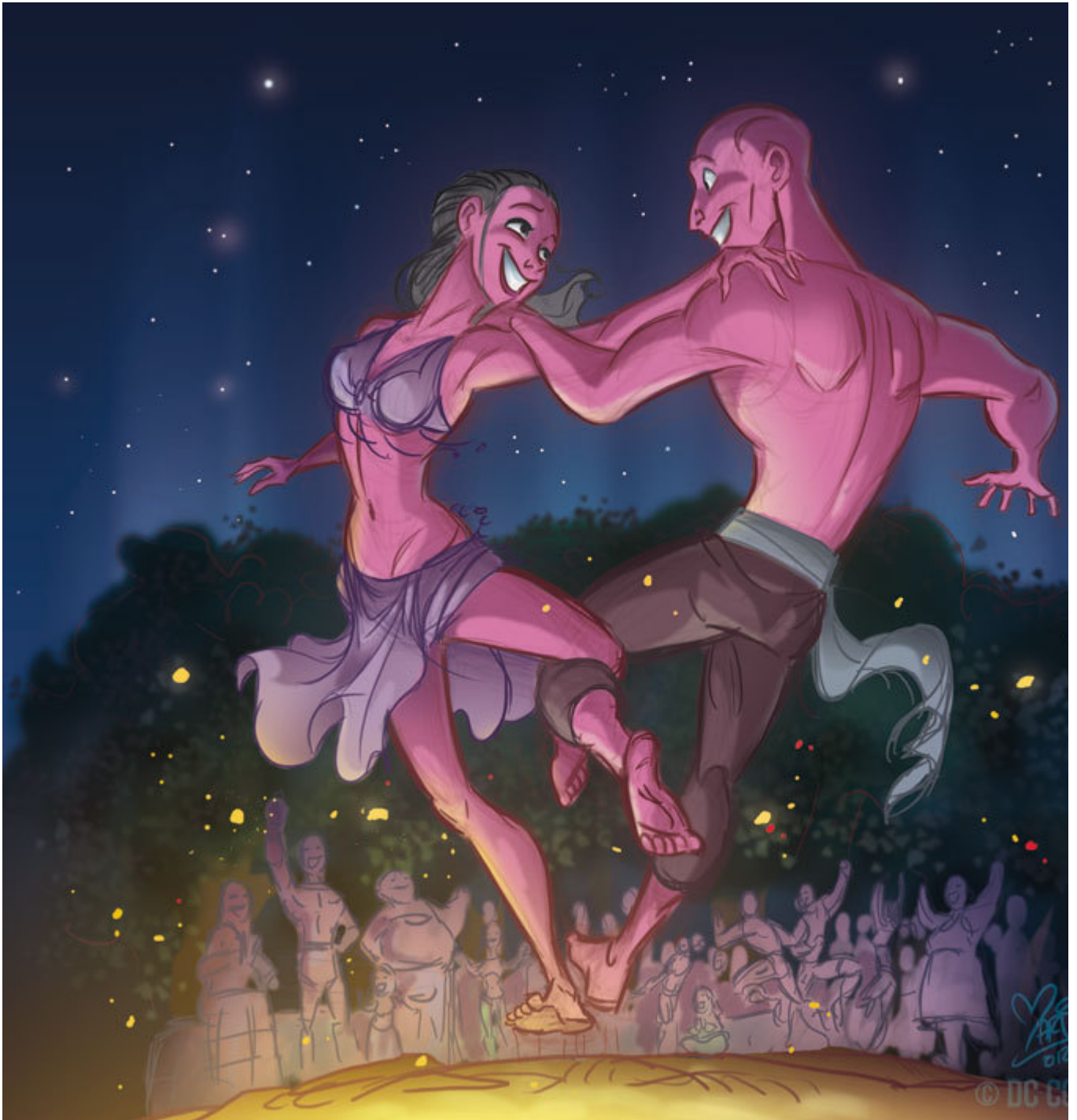
“Well, now that you are here, how do you like our little planet? Beautiful, isn't it?” she asked him with a squeeze of his hand, and a thrill ran up his arm.

“Quite,” he said as he looked at her lovely face.

She smiled at him, before she released him and went to grab her brother's arm. “Come now, Abin, you owe me a dance,” she told him as she pulled him out into the square. He let his suit dissolve away until all he was wearing was some black pants, and he chuckled as she took a green sash and wrapped it around his waist.

They stood side by side, facing opposite direction, and like the others around them, they placed their hands on one another's shoulders and bounced their heels off the stone before they started to twist around. They kept their hands on their shoulders, every once and again entwining their legs and then going under each other's arms. It looked messy, but, Sinestro had to begrudgingly admit, it looked fun. It was not a dance you practiced to death in the off season. It was a folk dance. It didn't have to

be perfect. And it was a lovely thing to witness.



When they were done, they were both laughing, and they stumbled back over to Sinestro. “Okay, okay, I haven’t done that in a long time. I need to catch my breath. You are impossible to keep up with.” Arin collapsed onto the bench opposite the one that Sinestro had elected to sit on.

Arin Sur sat down with him, patting his shoulder with a mockingly soothing expression. “Aw, poor old man. Can’t dance more than one song without getting winded.”

“Oh quiet,” Arin Sur panted, and he gave Sinestro a glare as he laugh a little. “You two are both against me. I’m going to get us something to drink. One moment.” He stood up, padding barefoot over to the stalls set up on the sidelines.

Arin Sur got up and went to sit by Sinestro. “Can you do me a favor?” she asked him.

Anything your heart desires, he wanted to say, but he managed not to. "Of course."

She turned her back to him and lifted up her hair to show him the knot at the nape of her neck that kept her top up. "Can you retie this? I can feel it getting looser and looser, and I don't want to flash the whole of the festival."

What a sight that would be. Sinestro lifted his hands to the knot, feeling the heat of her skin radiating up to touch his fingertips. He pulled the knot free, feeling his breath stop at the sight of her uncovered neck, before he looped the strap over the other again and pulled it tighter. "Is this too tight?" he asked her, leaning over a little to catch sight of her face.

"It's perfect," she said as she turned at head and spread her lips in a smile.

His heart gave a thud, and he looped the fabric in a knot again. It may have been too good a knot. He almost volunteered to help her get out of it later, and then he inwardly slapped himself because that was highly inappropriate. "Done," he told her, and she let her hair fall back into place again.

"Thank you," she said, turning toward him and giving him that radiant grin. She was so unbelievably pretty that it hurt. A good portion of his braincells had given up trying to function around her.

"Here's some delicious cider for us," Abin Sur said as he came back, and Sinestro had almost forgotten about him entirely. She looked a little confused to see them sitting together, before his smile took on a strange gleam that could be called devious. Sinestro didn't understand it.

He took the cider and lifting it to his lips, unprepared for how sweet it was. He tried not to make a face as he drank it, because he was thirsty. He could have done with some water right about then.

Arin Sur drained her cup and tossed it, landing in a trash bin with accuracy. Sinestro was impressed, and he also thought it was adorable. Everything about this woman was adorable, if he was hard pressed.

They all turned their attention over to the square as several people wheeled in four tall poles on platforms. The top of each pole had a long horizontal extension with a thick velvety lengths of red cloth that reached the ground at the end. They organized the cloths into a square.

"That's my cue," Arin Sur said, standing up and dusting off the front of her outfit, before she sent a wink over her shoulder at Sinestro. "You'll like this." And she bounded off, leaving Sinestro with a growing blush on his cheeks. He had a feeling he'd like anything she did.

"Can you be any more obvious right now?" Abin Sur asked him in a sly tone, and he laughed heartily when Sinestro gave him an aghast look. "Oh, come on! I'm not upset or anything. Besides, if you want to be with her, it's not up to me. You'll have to impress her."

Sinestro looked back at the center of the square as a slow, gentle song started up. Arin Sur, along with three other dancers, wrapped her foot with the cloth and ascended it part way, starting to sway back and forth in unison to the music. She leaned back, hanging onto the cloth with one hand as she let the other reach out and swing slowly. She twisted, turning the cloth around and around, before she let the tension go and twisted back the other way.

It was so an exquisite display that Sinestro found himself holding his breath as he watched her and the way she used the cloth to both caress her stomach and legs and to suspend herself off the ground. He let out that breath when she uncurled from herself and hung, upside down with one knee bent and the other straight out. Her back was arched, and her arms were spread like she was flying.

When the music stopped, it was like coming out of a dream, and Sinestro couldn't help the smile the



played along his lips. She jogged back over to them after getting down, giggling and apparently giddy from all the blood rushing to her head. As she sat down next to her brother and chatted to him, Sinestro found himself watching her with a kind of longing. He didn't understand this sudden and deep attraction for her, and it was there and it was so very real.

He wanted to know her, to laugh with her, to see her smile. He wanted to watch her dance, and he wanted to know her hobbies. He wanted to be around her and for her to want to be around him. He wanted to learn her culture so that he would have things to talk to her about. He wanted to show her Korugar's city scape. He wanted to be with her.

Next time Abin Sur asked him to come to Ungara, he would not be so quick to refuse.

## Chapter End Notes

This marks the end of the In The Name of Sinestro series. I had all the fun in the world writing this.

If you want more Sinestro and Arin, you can read a short collection of fics I wrote for them [here](#) and [here](#).

And thank you once again for inspiring a great scene in this story, [Mari](#). You're the best.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!